THE RUINS OF NOL-DAER — Abandoned ruins never are
OF NESTS AND NATIONS — A city besieged from within
THE MOOR-TOMB MAP — But where's the dungeon?

Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR® ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

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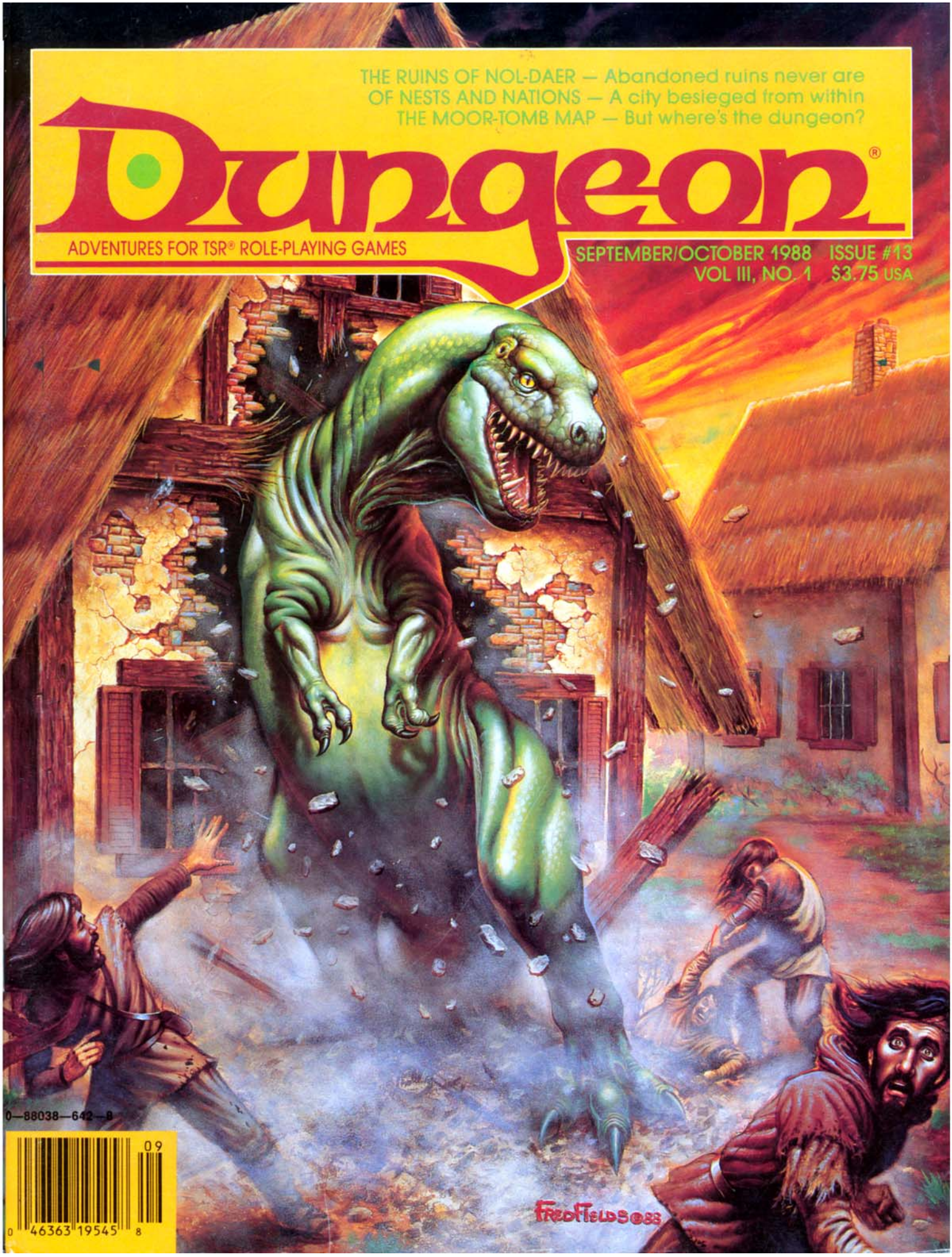

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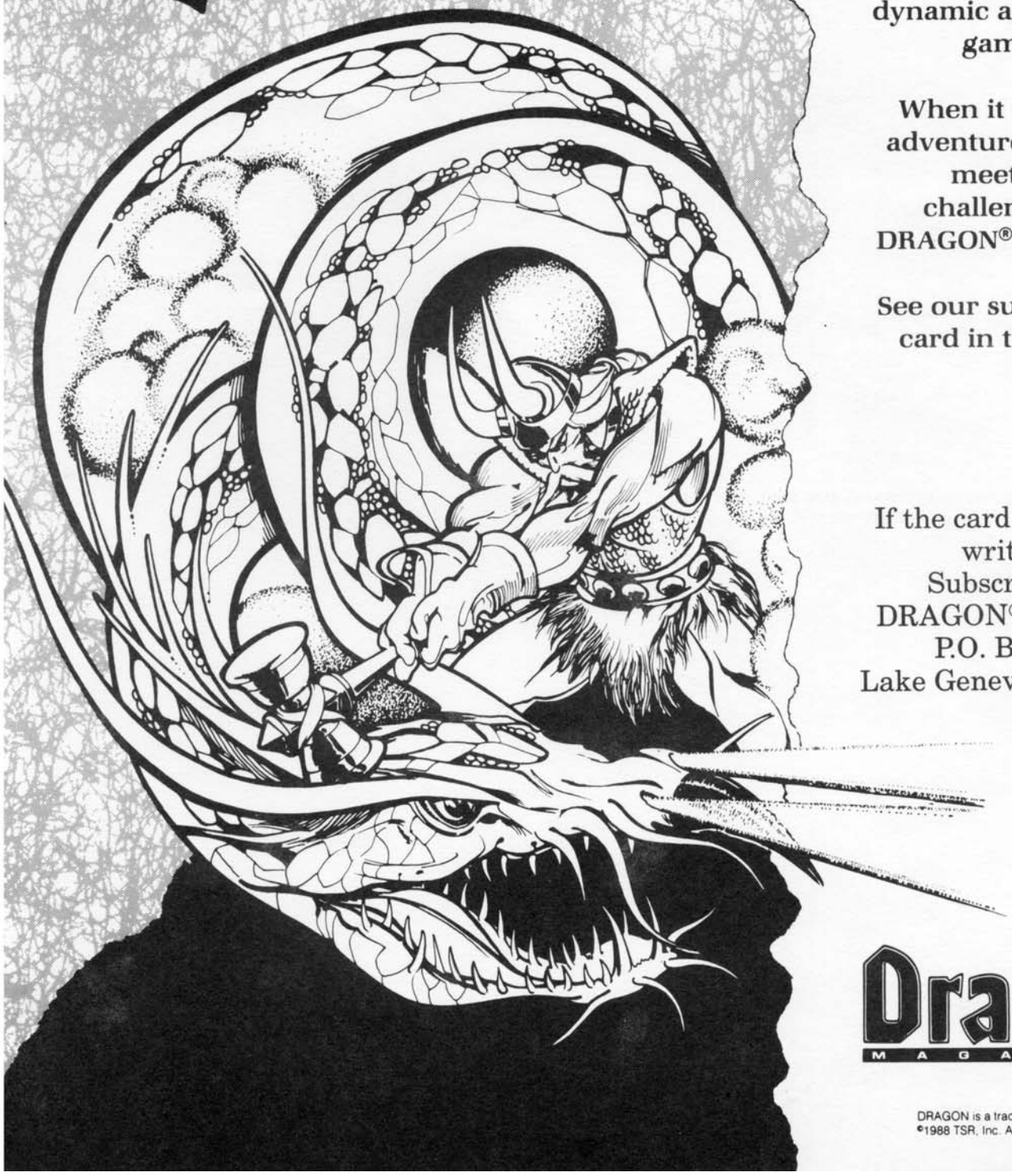

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ADVENTURES FOR TSR® ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1988 ISSUE #13

COVER:
The residents of Specularum have a close encounter of the Tyrannosaurus kind in Fred Fields' cover painting for "Of Nests and Nations."

We Need Your Advice

Somewhere in this issue you will find a special postcard. No, we're not offering any special deals to part you from your gold pieces. We just want to know a bit about you and what you would like to see in DUNGEON Adventures.

The information from our first readers survey will be used to direct the course of the magazine in future months. While the editors may have strong opinions about what to put in each issue, if what we enjoy is not what you need, we are being shortsighted. Instead of guessing about our readers, we want data.

In order to make use of this information, we'd like to receive all your responses by October 15, 1988. That should give everyone more than two months to respond. But don't wait until October to mail the card, lest you forget to do it. Fill it out and mail it now. If more than one person (or your entire gaming group) reads this copy, you can either photocopy the card or send your answers on a postcard or in a letter — but please, only one survey per person.

Of course, we always love to receive your detailed letters about our magazine, either critiquing what we've printed or telling us what you'd like to see. So keep those cards and letters coming.

Barbara G. Young

P. S. We apologize to all our subscribers for causing a panic with the mailing wrappers for issue #12. Due to a production error, *everyone* received the notice, "Your subscription expires in 2 more issues!" But don't panic. The first line of your mailing label shows the real last issue of your current subscription.

Vol. III, No. 1

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The Readers — **LETTERS** *2*

H. L. McClesky — **THE RUINS OF NOL-DAER**
(ADD 5-8) He left the Abyss to visit his human mother, not realizing he was a century too late. Still, there was a lot he had left to do. *3*

Patricia Nead Elrod — **GOING ONCE...GOING TWICE**
(ADD Any Level) An Arch-Mage is retiring and selling his possessions — and you're at the auction! *19*

Jon Bailey — **THE MOOR-TOMB MAP**
(ADD 2-4) It's a battered map from a half-forgotten legend. Do its secrets lead to wealth or to something less pleasant? *24*

Patrick G. Goshtigian & Nick Kopsinis — **THE TREASURE VAULT OF KASIL**
(ADD 5-7) The owners of the vault dared all looters to test their wits against it. Hundreds of years later, the vault is still unopened. Now, it's your turn to try to get in. *41*

Randy Maxwell — **OF NESTS AND NATIONS**
(DD 8-12) Watchmen are murdered, ships explode and sink in their berths, and savage monsters are summoned in the streets — but no one can catch the killers. *47*

Never consider a sorcerer dead for good until you have seen him die a minimum of three times.

Demons of the Dancing Gods, Jack L. Chalker

LETTERS

Do You Really Want That Sword?

In "The Dark Conventicle" (issue #11), you forgot to tell how to get the broad sword from the platform in the sanctuary. You also forgot to tell if it was enchanted.

Dewey Overholt
Woodhaven, Michigan

The sword is an integral part of the altar and cannot be removed and used. It breaks off on a successful bend bars/ lift gates *roll. It certainly carries several deadly diseases. The DM also has the option to allow the sword to be removed, but the person who removes it falls under a horrible curse; the DM should use creativity here.*

Hates Covers, Solo Adventures

What happened! For the last two issues you have had the dumbest and stupidest covers I have ever seen printed. When I took a look at the cover of issue #12, I thought for many seconds whether or not I should renew my subscription. I pay good money for this magazine and I want to get my money's worth out of it. Put more covers on that are exciting, like issues 1, 2, 7, and 9.

And the cover wasn't the only thing wrong! Some of the modules were not even worth playing. "Huddle Farm" was another of those stupid comic adventures. They're corny, boring, and very unenjoyable. Next you had a solo adventure. It was well written and exciting, but when I ordered this magazine I was expecting modules, not solo adventures.

Ryan Fox
Lakewood, Colorado

Wooing New Subscribers

I must say that I have consistently enjoyed your refreshing publication since its beginning. The overall presentation of your magazine is much more personal than many others. Each of the covers is beautifully rendered and has something to do with the large module inside. Also, the brief notes about the authors give insight into what it takes to be published.

I have noticed that you seem to be eagerly searching for new readers. This is evidenced by the recent sale of your magazine in stores and the "incentive" module in DRAGON® Magazine #131. Two things seem to be scaring new subscribers off. One is the comparatively small size of DUNGEON® Adventures to DRAGON Magazine — 64 to 104 pages, respectively. The second is your bimonthly rate of publication. Those who currently subscribe to DRAGON Magazine at $30.00 for 12 issues may feel that $18.00 for six issues is not such a good deal.

I have several suggestions to make, in the order you would need to use them. First, increase the size of your magazine. I don't think that raising your page count to 88 (like the old DRAGONs) and your cover price to $3.95 would hurt anyone. Next, increase the rate of publication from bimonthly to monthly. I realize that this would require a larger staff, but I'm sure hundreds of people would leap at the chance.

Finally, who is Diesel? Perhaps you could run a "TSR Profiles" article like those found in DRAGON Magazine.

Christian D. Stiehl
Farmington Hills, Michigan

While there is very little advertising in DUNGEON Adventures, almost a third of each DRAGON Magazine is ads. If the ads were removed and the text shuffled around, DRAGON Magazine would have only about 70 pages per issue, not so many more than an issue of DUNGEON Adventures. Each module in DUNGEON Adventures costs less than $1.00 (sometimes only 50 cents).

Diesel is Dave LaForce, a 28-year-old graphic artist who has been involved with TSR for nine years. He is currently a full-time map and game board designer. Look for his work in the BUCK ROGERS™ *and* HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER™ *games, and in many of the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ modules. In his spare time, Diesel likes comic books and old sci-fi and monster movies, and is an enthusiastic Kate Bush music fan. As Diesel draws 99% of our maps, we've added his name to the staff box on page 1.*

Simple Praise

Great idea, making your magazine available to all now, otherwise I would never have seen it and found out how great it is. I always wondered why DRAGON Magazine didn't have any short modules in it; now I know where they've all been.

One thing I like most about your magazine is its simplicity. No fancy articles or useless clutter. Just one page of letters and 5-8 adventures. It's refreshing to see such a simple idea in a magazine.

Kent A. Bliven
No Address Given

(continued on page 18)

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THE RUINS OF NOL-DAER

BY H. L. McCLESKEY

Abandoned and forgotten ruins never are.

Artwork by Richard Bennett
Cartography by H.L. McCleskey

Born and raised in south Texas, Howard "Mac" McCleskey shares a town house with his wife, Kristi, and their two cats, Calvin and Hobbes. He holds a B.S. degree in computer science from the University of Houston and currently works for a Texas Education Service Center as a computer analyst/consultant. His hobbies include golf, adventure gaming, reading and writing science fiction, and playing the guitar.

"The Ruins of Nol-Daer" is an AD&D® module for 6-8 characters of levels 5-8. A well-balanced party is recommended, containing a minimum of two fighter types, one thief, one or more magic-users, and at least one cleric of up to 7th level to help balance undead encounters in the crypt area. One or more PCs should have infravision, and the ability to *detect invisibility* is important.

This adventure is set in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting, but can be relocated to any temperate forested area in the DM's own campaign world. A copy of the FIEND FOLIO® tome will be very helpful for monster descriptions and statistics.

Stealth and timing are critical in this adventure. A hack-and-slash approach will alert the major foe, a cambion, who will summon demonic aid and flee — only to attack later when the party is unprepared.

Adventure Background

The site of an ancient castle, Nol-Daer has recently been the location of some strange occurrences. Quiet for almost 200 years, these ruins have often served as a refuge for roving groups of bandits and humanoid bands traveling through the northern Suss Forest. Located on the Wild Coast (hex J4-104 on the WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting maps), these ruins lie approximately 85 miles southwest of Badwall (population 3,000).

Lately, Nol-Daer has been avoided because of rumors spread by local humans and humanoids alike. One bandit lord tells tales of gargoyles and blood hawks that roost in its ruined towers, and how the creatures killed and ate several of his best men. At the same time, some 60 miles west of the castle, several dwarves are missing from mining camps in the foothills of the Lortmil Mountains. This is not the first time such a thing has happened,

but local authorities are keeping the disappearances under wraps to avoid panic and possible shutdown of the silver mines, already behind in their ore output. Additionally, this area has been plagued with minor but regular thefts of cattles, horses, and other livestock from scattered farms and communities.

The PCs can become aware of the castle ruins and the unusual happenings in the area in any of several ways:

— PCs may be secretly employed by the owners of the silver mine in an effort to explain the disappearing dwarves.

— PCs stumble across the ruins while exploring the forest or when chasing a group of raiding orcs.

— Stories of the castle are overheard in a local tavern, or the information is extracted from a captured bandit.

— PCs find a map to the castle while researching a magical item or spell.

— PCs are hired by a farming family to investigate the livestock thefts.

For the Dungeon Master

The real story behind the castle is quite different from the blood hawks and gargoyles of the rumors. The cambion son of the original castle owner (who was an evil sorceress of some repute) has returned in an effort to recover some valuable books supposedly buried in an underground laboratory.

Long years ago, Demara the Enchantress had a passing fling with a conjured demonic friend. MacDaer, her cambion son, was born 11 months later. Realizing that his physical attributes would prevent him from being accepted by society, she *plane-shifted* him to a remote level of the Abyss and placed him in the care of a local baron, Arzial. There MacDaer grew to manhood, raised with demonic friends. He learned the arts of thieving, and when he grew bored with that, turned his attentions to the mystic arts. He progressed quickly until he reached the 5th level of magic-use, at which point he encountered some sort of mental block. Although he could understand higher-level magic, it never worked right for him. His mentor, sensing that the cambion had reached his limit, suggested that his mother may have had the same problem. Together they decided the solution was probably to be found in one of her spell books. Preparations were made, and MacDaer was sent back to find the answers.

When he arrived, two things were immediately apparent. First of all, there was a time differential between the Prime Material plane and his layer of the Abyss. He was only 46 years old, but more than 100 years had passed at Nol-Daer. Second, the castle was in ruins and his mother, the laboratory, and the answers he sought were gone. With no clue as to what had happened and no way back to the Abyss, he decided to claim the castle and dig until he found his mother's laboratory. After several months, and with the enlisted aid of a dozen spriggans, the semi-demon rid the ruins of bandits and began searching for the lost library. It was only then that he found the hidden entrance to a large underground cavern nearby.

When Nol-Daer was destroyed 50 years ago by a passing orcish army, a pair of black dragons, originally pets of the sorceress, were trapped inside a partially collapsed cavern far beneath the castle. Although the cavern had fresh air and water, the burrowing animals and blind fish the dragons caught were just barely enough to feed them.

Then one day a wandering hermit stumbled across the cavern. Desperate for food, the dragons convinced the hermit to steal "a horse or two" in return for gold. Eight horses and three cows later — and 20 gold pieces richer — the hermit agreed to supply the dragons with food on a regular basis. The hermit kept his end of the bargain and visited the cavern four times a month. He was not, however, such a fool as to listen to the dragons' entreaties to hire workmen to come and free them from their prison. He knew if he did so, his steady income would be cut off — not to mention his own life.

The hermit used his meager earnings to build a small cottage nearby, and there raised three adopted sons, orphans from Badwall he found starving in the streets on his infrequent trips to town. He taught them to feed and, more importantly, fear the dragons. When they had grown, the sons traveled for a while with a roving group of bandits but eventually returned to the quieter life with a steady income. After the hermit died from illness, his sons stayed on and their bandit friends often camped in the castle ruins from time to time. Recently, the hermit's sons were slain and replaced by dopplegangers (see area 11), though the dopplegangers have continued to bring stolen cattle and horses to the dragons below.

The cambion, looking for a buried laboratory, had not expected to find full-grown dragons. His first thought was to quickly collapse the cavern, but the natural chasm seemed to be an easy way to reach the buried castle cellars. After striking an uneasy truce with the scaly pair, the cambion was allowed to continue digging, but only after promising that all new tunnels would be constructed large enough to allow passage for dragons, and that the tiny cavern entrance would be enlarged once the stairs to the cellars were completed.

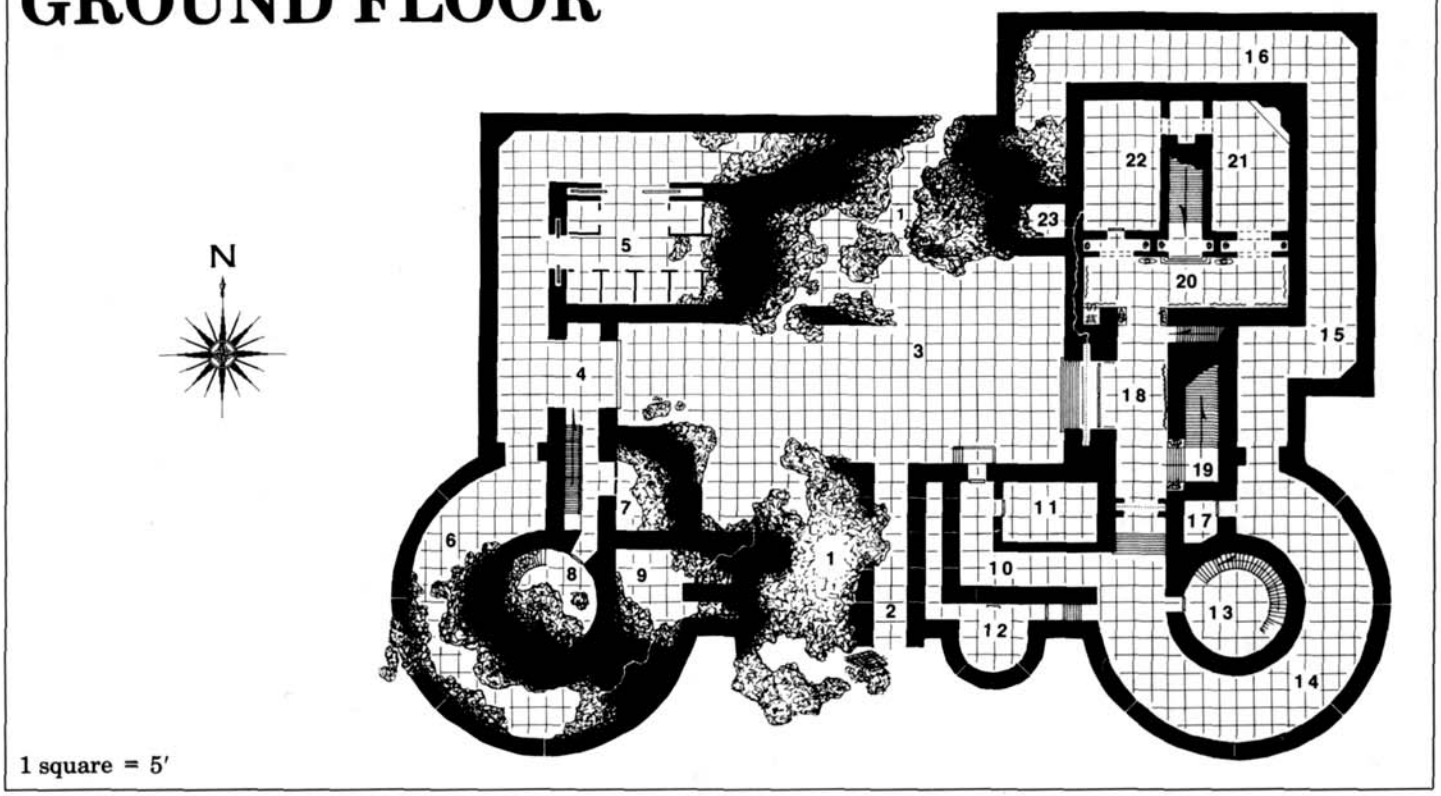
The result of many weeks of excavation was a rough-cut, sloping passageway that promptly collapsed, killing seven spriggans and injuring the female dragon. Needless to say, the male dragon was furious. Only after a substantial bribe and repeated promises of freedom was the dragon convinced to spare the sorceress's son and his spriggan hirelings.

Since that time, the cambion has begun to enslave dwarven miners taken from nearby mining camps. The kidnapped dwarves are far better miners than the spriggans, but they work as slowly as possible, grumbling with each swing of the hammer. The cambion assists the operation by using his *amulet of the Abyss* (see "New Magical Items") to summon 1-6 manes each morning, instructing them to kill any short being who tries to escape. At the end of each day, the manes become insubstantial and return to the Abyss. The spriggans control the dwarves through threats, assuming giant size whenever trouble starts. Any dwarves who cause trouble or become unable to work become dragon snacks.

The cambion son of Demara should be the major foe in this adventure. The dragons are a higher-level encounter, but they are trapped in the cavern and thus subject to missile and spell attacks. Knowing this, the dragons never attack until intruders are well into the caverns, and they pursue any PCs that flee to prevent their return.

MacDaer, on the other hand, never confronts the PCs directly, preferring instead to escape whenever possible, then attack a weakened party from behind. He has no sense of honor or duty, but feels that the castle belongs to him and intends to keep it at all costs (see the end of this adventure for more

GROUND FLOOR



information on the cambion). He permits any and all monsters to lair aboveground so long as they either assist him from time to time in his work or else leave him strictly alone.

Assuming a party with good or lawful tendencies, a successful adventure includes the following:

1. The prevention of the dragons' release, thus avoiding destruction of nearby towns and resulting vengeful actions of angry townspeople.

2. The slaying or banishment of the cambion and harmful castle inhabitants (dragons, undead, trolls, jermlaine, etc.).

3. Recovery of wealth and magical items from castle inhabitants' lairs and dragons' hoard.

The PCs' journey to and arrival at the ruins of the old castle are left to the DM for development as best fits his campaign. The surrounding terrain is an uninhabited temperate forest, for purposes of generating random encounters using the table on pages 184-185 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide.* The Wild Coast encounter table in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting's Glossography (page 12) and the notes on the Wild Coast and Suss Forest found in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK guide book (pages 41-42 and 58) should be of great assistance in planning out encounters as well.

Note the unmapped, nearby cave entrance described at area 50. The DM should consider the possibility that a spell such as *commune with nature* or other appropriate divination spell will reveal this entrance or other relevant information about the castle ruins. The appearance of a spriggan near the cave entrance might also be a clue that the area should be carefully explored. Finally, nearly all of the intelligent inhabitants of the ruins are fully aware of the location of the cave entrance, and some use it regularly to visit the cavern level.

Ground Floor

1. Broken Stone and Underbrush. These areas are filled with fallen pieces of wall and overgrown with weeds. PCs attempting to move through these areas should be warned about possible dangers such as treacherous footing, snakes, etc. If they insist on traveling here, someone should twist an ankle, encounter a rattlesnake, or disturb a hill of red fire ants. PCs searching these areas find nothing of value, but there is a 5% chance per round of noticing small humanoid footprints mixed with rat tracks. Other sorts of prints may also be found, mostly human and dwarven. Rangers and barbarians have a 15% chance per round of noticing these tracks, and PCs with secondary skills of hunter or trapper have a 10% chance.

2. Main Entry. This portion of the ruins used to be the primary entrance to the castle. The passage is 10′ wide, with a smooth stone floor and vaulted ceiling 20′ high. At the south end of the passage lie pieces of what was once a great portcullis. The west wall has partially collapsed, leaving a large hole filled with thorn bushes and rubble. The remaining portions of both walls are lined with arrow slits, one opening every 10′. Although nobody is behind these slits, the DM should roll dice occasionally for effect.

3. Courtyard. The courtyard is partially overgrown with weeds, although some limited traffic (including occasion-

al bandits) has left areas of bare dirt and ashes from old campfires. At dusk, blood hawks and *polymorphed* huecuvas from the keep search the courtyard for possible victims (see areas 35 and 40). If the party splits into groups of one or two to search this area, there is a 90% chance that they are attacked by 2-5 gargoyles (see areas 8 and 13). At the far west end of the courtyard, a 20′-wide opening leads into the stables and storage areas. To the east, a large portcullis stands at the top of a short flight of stone steps. Behind the iron portcullis are a pair of bronzewood doors (triple barred from the inside; see area 18). On the south wall, near the portcullis, there is a small alcove shielding a wooden door from the elements. Random bits and pieces of arms, armor, and bones from past victims of the monsters here may be found after only the briefest search, though none of these items are valuable.

Anyone examining the portcullis carefully has a 10% chance per level of noting a small tunnel opening in the north wall where the portcullis stands. The tunnel is only 8″ wide and is partially hidden by the portcullis bars. This is a jermlaine tunnel and is more fully described at area 23. If the PCs make a great deal of noise (as when trying to break open the doors to area 18), the jermlaine will send 1-2 of their number to spy upon the PCs from here.

4. Stable Entry. The stone floor here is littered with rotten straw and broken pieces of stone. To the north, a 10′-wide alcove is filled with several empty barrels and crates. Closer inspection reveals that these crates once held goods stolen in a bandit raid on a merchant caravan, but nothing of value remains. The ceiling is 16′ high, and the walls are of cut gray stone. To the south, a stone stairway leads up to a door on the second floor of the castle. Beside the stairs is a 5′-wide passageway leading south to areas 7 and 8.

5. Stables. The stables of Nol-Daer, once filled with fine horses, now lie in ruin. The east end of the stables has collapsed, and the ceiling over the center looks unsafe (just ask a dwarf). The stables are empty and contain only a few items to puzzle adventurers: a yellow candle stub, two large thigh bones (from an orc recently gnawed on by trolls), and lots of dust and rotten straw.

6. West Tower Base. This area also has a stone floor and a 16′-tall ceiling. The wall closest to the center of the west tower often had supplies and equipment piled against it, while the outside wall sported a raised wooden walkway (only bits of which still remain) that allowed archers access to the arrow slits in the outside walls. The arrow slits here are 4′ tall, 9″ wide, and start approximately 9′ off the floor. In the final battle of Nol-Daer, a large hole was broken in the tower wall here; many old orc-made arrowheads and broken weapons lie scattered here, as well as the metal pieces and some of the wood from the orcs' ram. The forest has grown through this breach in the wall, filling the passageway with rubble, dirt, and large weeds. The 4′-tall dark-green weeds are, in fact, **witherweed** (AC 8; MV nil; HD 3; hp 14; #AT 14; Dmg nil; SA drain dexterity, toxic smoke if burned; AL N). All residents of these ruins know of and avoid this area.

7. Stablehands' Quarters. This room is open to the sky in the northeast corner because of collapsed walls and ceiling. Loose stone rubble fills most of the room, and the remainder is filled with trash and dead rats. There is nothing of value here.

8. West Tower Core. The west tower is in ruins. Most of the stone work has fallen in on itself or has been rearranged by the flying inhabitants of the two towers. The room in the center of the tower was formerly furnished with a circular staircase (similar to the one in area 13), but now rubble and dust cover the steps that serve as the lair for two **gargoyles** (AC 5; MV 9″/15″; HD 4+4; hp 29, 21; #AT 4; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; AL CE). In the gargoyles' nests on the steps above are 707 sp, 16 gp, and a rusty dagger. Having found greater safety in numbers, the gargoyles do not bother (but neither do they assist) the other evil inhabitants of these ruins.

9. Mini-Men Outpost. This sealed-off area currently serves as a sanctuary for the smallest castle inhabitants, its only entrances being small tunnels approximately 9″ wide and 18″ high. This tiny room is inhabited by 1-12 **jermlaine** (AC 7; MV 15″; HD ½; hp 1-4; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 with dart, 1-4 with pike; SA/SD see FIEND FOLIO tome, pages 53-54; AL NE). Also present are 2-40 **normal rats** (AC 7; MV 15″; HD ¼; hp 1-2; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA 5% chance of disease; AL NE). There is no treasure here, but there are many tiny weapons used to ambush victims. The jermlaine and rats get along fairly well with the dopplegangers from area 11, and they have assisted each other against attackers in the past.

10. Vaulted Passage. The floor in this passage is made of cool, moist stone and slopes slightly down toward the south. There are three arrow slits in the west wall and one at the south end of the passage. Beside the east door sits a pair of worn leather boots, and an oaken staff leans against the wall. Inside one of the boots, peering over the top, is a large gray rat. This is a **vapor rat** (AC 6 or special; MV 12″//6″ (1″); HD 2; hp 14; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SA stinking cloud; SD gaseous form; AL CN) which appears to be wearing an amulet of some sort. It climbs out of the boot to stand on its hind legs in the center of the passage, then attempts to flee through the rat hole in the east wall of the hallway. This rat is one of the largest, most intelligent rats in the castle, and a personal pet of the dopplegangers in area 11. The (nonmagical) amulet the rat is wearing was a recent gift from the dopplegangers. It consists of a leather strap with a small piece of obsidian attached (value 12 gp).

11. Doppleganger Lair. In relatively good repair, this 17′ × 27′ room currently serves as the living quarters for two **dopplegangers** (AC 5; MV 9″; HD 4; hp 23, 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-12; SA surprise on 1-4; SD save as 10th-level fighter, ESP, mimicking abilities; AL N). The dopplegangers killed the hermit's three sons two weeks ago, took the places of two of them, and claimed to other residents of the ruins of Nol-Daer that an orc slew the third. They change shape often (out of everyone's eyesight) and may appear as grizzled hermits, middle-aged druids, unkempt bandits, or duplicates of party members. There is only a 30% chance of encountering one (and a 10% chance of both) in their lair, as they spend a lot of time exploring the surrounding area. They know about the dragon caves, and in disguise as the hermit's sons have visited the tunnels below. Not even MacDaer knows of their duplicity, though the dopple-

gangers have no intention of attacking or replacing the semi-demon — they are too afraid of him. The dopplegangers work well with the jermlaine and rats in the ruins.

This room is simply furnished, with two wooden beds, a small writing desk, and a large oak wardrobe (locked). Inside the wardrobe are the blue and gray robes of the hermit's sons, and some tattered guard uniforms once worn by bandits. The shallow desk drawer contains a bottle of dried ink, three sheets of parchment, and two quill pens. The dopplegangers' treasure is hidden beneath a loose stone in the floor under the bed. It consists of 253 ep, 17 gp, and a potion of *levitation.*

12. Gatehouse Turret. Both the archer hallway and small gatehouse defense tower have raised wooden floors that appear normal but are no longer structurally sound. For each round spent in these areas, there is a 20% chance of a party member falling through the rotten floor to the dirt 8′ below, suffering 1-4 hp damage. The northernmost section between areas 2 and 10 is filled with large webs from floor to ceiling. This is home for three **large spiders** (AC 8; MV 6″ *15″; HD 1+1; hp 6, 5, 2; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison, save at +2; AL N). An iron ladder on the north wall leads up to the gatehouse roof. The other inhabitants of these ruins don't like the idea of large spiders living in their midst (the spiders moved in a week before the PCs arrived) and are considering burning them out shortly.

13. East Tower Core. The east tower of Nol-Daer is still relatively intact. A circular stone stairway cantilevered off the wall leads upward to a door on the second level, and above that, a trapdoor to the roof battlements. These stairs also serve as the lair for three **gargoyles** (hp 31, 30, 29; see area 8 for complete statistics). Scattered on the floor and tower stairs are 368 sp and 25 gp. These gargoyles, like those in area 8, do nothing to help or hinder others living at the ruins, but will do all they can to take advantage of situations for their own benefit.

14. East Tower Base. This area is similar to area 6 but in much better condition. The wooden platforms beneath the arrow slits are still in place (but in the same condition as the floor in area 12), and there are some burned spots on the floor that might have once been campfires. The portcullis blocking the way into area 18 is down, but several of the bars have been bent aside far enough to allow passage. As the party approaches areas 15 and 16, the air becomes very damp and musty and it is very, very dark, even during daylight hours.

15. Musty Hallway. This 15′-wide hallway served as an outer defense shell when the castle was young. The roof of the passage is made of stone, reinforced with heavy timbers, and forms the lower battlements that once surrounded Nol-Daer. As the party moves north, a strange figure emerges from the darkness, heading south. Formerly a hobgoblin, this creature wears scraps of armor and brandishes a footman's mace. As he gets closer, the party realizes that he makes no sound, has a glazed look in his eyes, and is drooling a yellowish liquid. This is a **yellow musk zombie** (AC 5; MV 9″; HD 2; hp 8; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD immune to mind-influencing spells; AL NE).

The hobgoblin was a scout for a raiding force that passed by this area one month before the adventurers arrived. Having climbed over the wall at area 16, he fell victim to the yellow musk creeper. Area 14 is as far as the creeper allows the zombie to go. Other beings at Nol-Daer know this and avoid this area.

16. More Hallway. One to four rounds after the melee with the hobgoblin begins, more yellow musk zombies approach the party from the north. These are the freshest zombies and guard the mother plant and several small seedlings. If the party flees, the zombies do not pursue any farther than area 14.

There are two bandit **yellow musk zombies** (AC 7; hp 8, 4; moldy leather armor, shield, rusty short sword) and a half-orc fighter **yellow musk zombie** (AC 5; hp 16; Dmg by weapon type +1; S 16; chain mail, helm, long sword, 15 sp, 10 gp). The mother plant, a **yellow musk creeper,** is located in the far northwest corner of this area (AC 7; MV nil; HD 3; hp 14; #AT 8; Dmg nil; SA entrancement, intelligence drain; AL N). Further statistics on the zombies are identical to those of the hobgoblin zombie at area 15. The three zombies were from the same raiding force as the hobgoblin, having come here in search of their comrade a week after he left on his last mission.

Buried near the roots of the plant is the skeleton of a mage. He carries a *philter of beauty* and a bone scroll case. The case holds one scroll containing spells of *continual light, clairvoyance, invisibility,* and *stone shape,* all written by a 10th-level magic-user. The mage ran into another creeper six months ago, wandered and collapsed here, and became the foundation for the plant at this place.

17. Storeroom. This 10′ × 12′ room was once a storeroom and a privy. Now it is overgrown with **yellow mold** (AC 9; MV nil; HD nil; hp nil; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA poison spores; SD affected only by fire-based attacks; AL N). There is nothing here of value. The privy shaft is covered in mold and descends 30′ to an earthen bottom.

18. Entry Hall. The hallway here is floored with smooth stone, and the white walls are covered with faded and cracking frescoes of deep-hued woodland scenes. A large, mildewed tapestry (20′ × 20′) hangs on the east wall directly across from a large set of doors. The doors are barred with three huge iron bars wrapped in rusty chains and padlocked in several places (if a PC tries to force them open, divide his *bend bars/lift gates* chance by 10 and use that result for success). To either side of the doors are large wooden wheels attached to heavy chains which extend into the ceiling 25′ above. There are two stairways accessible from this hall. To the north, a 5′-wide staircase leads to the east and up to a door. To the south, a 10′-wide stairway goes down to the east, then turns north.

Located at the north end of the hall and at the entrance to the larger stairs are two pairs of unusual columns. These columns are 8′ tall and carved from an unidentifiable pale-blue stone. The statues are shaped like large two-headed skeletons (similar to ettins) and are holding stone swords at their sides.

The statues remain stone unless activated by an intruder stepping on the 5′ × 10′ section of floor between the two column pedestals. These are four special **caryatid columns** (AC 5; MV 6″; HD 5; hp 22 each; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SD half damage from normal weapons, chance

for breaking any weapon; AL N). The caryatids are enchanted to slay any living creature standing on the floor between them. If the floor area is clear for at least two rounds, the statues return to their pedestals and turn back into blue stone. Since they are activated only when someone touches the floor between them, the statues remain inert if the PCs jump or fly over the trigger area. Each time the caryatids return to stone, however, all damage to the statues is restored, and they begin the next melee with full hit points. If the statues are reduced to zero hit points, they crumble to dust, only to magically reform during the next week.

Should PCs run over the space between the two columns, the statues animate and stand in the doorway, awaiting the PCs' return. If this does not occur after two rounds, they move back to their positions. Obviously, these statues were meant to stop large groups of raiders, not fast-moving thieves, but they should startle and frighten some adventurers fairly well.

19. Stairway. This marble staircase leads down 80′ to the castle cellars. The stairs are littered with dust, cobwebs, tiny skeletons of rats that crunch underfoot, and fragments of stone fallen from the ceiling above. The steps are well worn, but the dust shows only two sets of recent footprints, apparently from a human and a gnome (actually from the cambion and a spriggan). The cambion and others habitually trot through these areas, so the caryatid columns activate but have no chance to attack — unless someone is pursuing the cambion. . . .

20. Main Keep Foyer. Remains of once-fine tapestries adorn the walls of this large entry hall. The floor is of white stone inlaid with a black and gold star-shaped mosaic. The foyer here is open above to the third level of the keep. To the north are three great arches leading to the kitchen (area 22), the grand stairway, and the dining hall (area 21). To either side of the large center arch stand stone figures carved of black rock, veined with silver and polished to a high gloss. They are 14′ tall and depict strange creatures with human bodies, tentacles for arms, and wolflike heads. In small alcoves just inside each arch are huge suits of rusty plate armor — purely ornamental, though of the right size for ogres. A careful search in the southwest corner behind a tapestry reveals a secret door opening into a 5′-square laddered shaft that leads down to the cellar.

21. Dining Hall. A great banquet table of oak fills most of this room. Around the table are 28 chairs, most of which are rickety or broken. Nestled in the northeast corner is a large fireplace with a pair of crossed staves above the mantle. In the north section of the east wall is the entrance to the kitchen. The staves above the fireplace are nonmagical and made of hickory. There is nothing else here of value.

If an enterprising character tries to climb through the chimney, he finds it is only 2′ wide (running through the 5′-thick walls at the northeast corner of area 33 on the second floor). The passage is clogged with soot and is totally blocked by rock and debris near the ceiling of the second floor. Chances to climb the chimney are at −25.

22. Kitchen. This large abandoned kitchen contains sinks, ovens, counters, and cabinets, most of which have not been used for years. There is an old chopping block table and an exposed beam ceiling with iron hooks overhead. A hidden jermlaine tunnel opens beneath one of the ovens. If they search, the PCs find several odd items — piles of bones, rags with bloodstains, empty ceramic flasks — but nothing of major significance. The jermlaine in area 23 will be alerted by any loud noises from this room. They will send 1-2 of their number to spy on the PCs from their 8″-diameter tunnel exit in this room. If given the opportunity, they will get help and attempt to waylay solitary adventurers, attacking them with spears and daggers.

23. Shaft Room. This small area amidst the ruins is completely sealed from the outside elements. The only entrance is from the kitchen (area 22) or portcullis (at area 18) via the 8″-diameter jermlaine tunnels. The most remarkable feature of this room is the 24″-diameter tunnel that spirals downward in circular staircase fashion to area 49 below. In the northeast corner of the room is a small silver statue of a jermlaine in religious garb. The jermlaine post guards here at all times because this is a front line of defense for the tunnels below, and as a lookout service for the courtyard and kitchen areas.

The inhabitants of this room are (at all times) four **jermlaine** (hp 4 (×2), 3, 2; see area 9 for complete statistics). The jermlaine keep a suspended net above the tunnel entrances to tangle intruders.

Second Floor

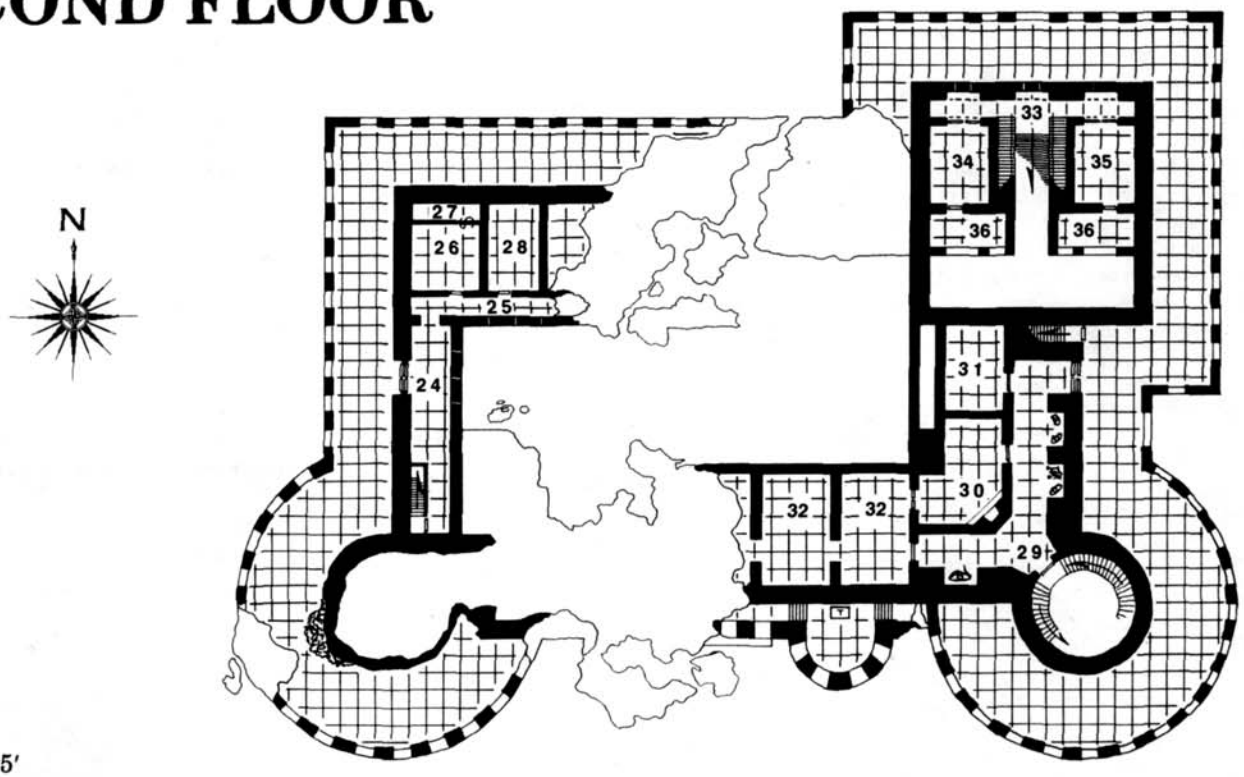
24. Second Floor Hallway. The stone stairway in area 4 leads up to the door at the south end of this area. The door is barred from this side, but the bar is only a rotting piece of wood (only a −1 to *open doors* rolls). In the eastern wall of the corridor are more arrow slits that overlook the courtyard. Directly across the hall, double doors open onto the battlements. At the north end of the passage there is a stone arch leading to an east-west passage beyond.

25. Dusty Passage. The hallway here is cobwebbed and dusty but shows signs of recent activity (no tracks, but scratch marks on the floor as if something had been dragged). There are arrow slits in the south wall, and the east end of the passage has collapsed, covering the floor with loose stones. If the PCs search among the stones, they can find lots of buried bones and rusted bits of armor, mostly human and orcish.

26. Meeting Room. The piles of dust, trash, and old rags in this room produce an acrid odor. Scattered about the floor are shards of glass, various animal bones and teeth, and ashes. There is a broken trestle table in the northeast corner with three broken chairs nearby. One chair remains at the table intact, its back to the eastern part of the north wall. The inhabitants of this room include 2-40 normal rats (see area 9 for statistics) and, sitting in the chair, the **phantom** (AC nil; MV 9″; HD nil; hp nil; #AT nil; Dmg nil; SA fear; AL NE) of the guard captain who died here.

Anyone viewing the phantom must save vs. spells at −2 or flee in panic as per the spell *fear.* Those who do not save panic for 1-6 rounds, or long enough for them to reach the courtyard. (DM Note: Remember to check each PC's percentage chance to drop a weapon in hand before fleeing in fear. Panicked PCs in the courtyard or castle make wonder-

SECOND FLOOR



1 square = 5′

ful victims for gargoyles, blood hawks, jermlaine, and dopplegangers.)

Persons who make their saving throws vs. spells may enter the room with no penalties but have an uneasy feeling about this spectral image. The phantom is insubstantial and merely an image of the guard at the time of his death. If party members watch closely, the phantom appears to be talking to someone at the table. A startled expression passes over its face and it slumps to the table, a phantom dagger buried in its back. After this occurs, the phantom fades out for 1-8 rounds, only to reappear at the table for the cycle to begin again.

A 4′-wide section of the north wall is a secret door, activated by pushing on a stone in the wall near the northeast corner. This secret storage area is where the captain's half-orc assassin (a member of the army that took the castle) was hiding on the day Nol-Daer fell. There is nothing of value in this room.

27. Secret Room. The room revealed by the secret door is a small storage closet 5′ deep and 20′ long. There are several boxes and crates as well as a weapons rack on the north wall, but the first thing the party will notice is the strange creature hovering near the west wall. This solitary biped with leathery skin and batlike wings glows with a pale purple radiance and floats about 6″ off the floor. Its eyes are closed, and its clawed arms are folded across its chest. This is a **berbalang** (AC 6; MV 6″/24″; HD 1+1; hp 8; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-6; AL CE). Having discovered this area after puzzling out the implications of the phantom's demise in area 26, this creature took refuge here to remain safe from outside forces while it projects itself into the Astral plane. Currently involved in a bizarre courtship ritual on the Astral plane, the berbalang is apparently comatose. If it is disturbed, however, it returns to its body in 1-100 rounds and attempts to defend itself (or flee, depending on the strength of the party).

If the PCs do not disturb the berbalang, it poses no threat. There are some items of interest on the creature, however. At its belt, the berbalang wears a sheathed dagger of obvious elven manufacture. The dagger is made of a mithral-steel alloy inlaid with silver and has a small blue sapphire set in the hilt. It is a *dagger +2, +3 vs. creatures larger than man-size.*

The berbalang also wears a gold ring on the ring finger of its left hand. If anyone gets within 5′, the ring begins a spoken conversation. This is *Gordon's magic ring* (see "New Magical Items"). The ring is bored since it cannot be projected astrally, and promises the PCs anything in order to get a new owner.

Most of the boxes and crates along the wall contain ropes, sacks, lanterns, and torches. There are more adventuring supplies in other boxes — nothing great, but a chance to get some spare equipment as the DM allows. The weapons rack on the north wall holds four spears, two pikes and 11 short swords. These weapons are usable but of poor quality, and there is a 5% chance that they will break with each successful attack.

28. Empty Room. This room has an extraordinary number of old bloodstains on the walls and floor (where survivors of the castle's fall were kept and eventually massacred by the orcs who conquered them. However, it is now completely empty.

29. Barracks Hallway. Apparently well traveled, this hallway is relatively dust free and all debris has been pushed into the alcoves. The statues shown on the map are made of carved and painted sandstone and are in bad shape. In the northernmost alcove, the statues are of a gnoll with a morning star and a bugbear with a flail. Both creatures are depicted in armor, which had once been painted red. In the next alcove there are also two statues, but one has been pounded into a shapeless mass of stone. The other is a statue of a troll, in remarkably good condition and only recently painted a coppery color.

The southern alcove contains a single statue of a fighter 15′ tall. The figure is humanoid, dressed in red plate mail, and wielding a dark-red footman's flail. The armor is for display only; it was welded together.

The door in the southeast corner of the hall opens onto a landing of the stairs in the east tower (not far from the gargoyles' nests in area 13). Double doors in the east wall at the north end of the hall lead onto the castle battlements. The door to area 31 is locked from the hall (no key), and a dark-red teardrop is painted on the door to area 30.

30. Troll Room. This is the lair of three paint-spattered **trolls** (AC 4; MV 12″; HD 6+6; hp 42, 39, 31; #AT 3; Dmg 5-8/5-8/2-12; SA fight three opponents at once; SD regeneration; AL CE). There is a stone fireplace in the southeast corner, and two large tables in the north end of the room are covered with pottery shards and partially eaten chunks of fresh deer meat. At the southwest end of the room there are three pallets on the floor in front of several benches leaning against an iron door. Beside the door is an empty bucket of copper-colored paint and two large, crude paintbrushes.

The trolls were invited to the castle by the three sons of the hermit who once lived near here; they had all been part of the same bandit gang some years ago. However, since the dopplegangers killed the sons, the trolls have been forgotten and no food has reached them (they used to borrow a cow or two from the ones brought in for the dragons). The trolls are rather angry about this and have hunted on their own, but plan soon to "chat" with the brothers and demand regular payments of

their services as guards. The trolls will aid other inhabitants of the ruins in any battle, as they love fighting.

If the trolls hear the party in the hallway, the two smaller trolls attack while the largest attempts to release the dogs in area 31. The largest troll has the key to the kennel in addition to a high-pitched whistle that keeps the dogs at bay (70% chance) when blown. If the adventurers surprise the trolls, the two smaller trolls fight while the largest tries to flank the adventurers by going through area 32 (releasing the dogs in area 31 if possible).

The trolls' treasure consists of an iron key, the silver dog whistle, and a metal box hidden in the ashes and charred logs of the fireplace. The box contains 31 cp, 23 sp, 37 ep, 188 gp, and 40 pp.

31. Dog Kennel. The largest troll in area 30 has the key to this locked room. The trolls use this room as a confinement area for four **death dogs** (AC 7; MV 12″; HD 2+1; hp 16, 13, 12, 11; #AT 2; Dmg 1-10/1-10; SA disease, knock to ground; AL NE). The dogs are well trained and do not bark at intruders in the hall or if someone bangs on the door, but rather remain quiet and attempt to surprise (and knock down) anyone opening their door. They have no treasure. These creatures obey only their troll masters in area 30. They avoid entering area 32.

32. Barracks. Formerly the guard barracks for Nol-Daer, these rooms are now filled with row after row of dusty bunk beds. Bleached bones and rusty weapons and armor litter the floor. But the dead here do not rest. Two rounds after the party enters, the bones animate and form themselves into undead warriors in a single round, while an evil gray mist swirls up from the floor. The party must face 25 **skeletons** (AC 7; MV 12″; HD 1; hp 8 (×3), 7 (×3), 6 (×2), 5 (×4), 4 (×3), 3 (×4), 2 (×3), 1 (×3); #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SD half damage from edged weapons; immune to *sleep, charm,* and cold-based spells; AL N). If successfully turned, they fall into pieces rather than flee. There is no treasure here.

33. Stair Landing. The Grand Stairway stops here, with two smaller stairways extending up to the third floor of the keep on either side. The stair land-

sage extending 25′ in each direction. The north wall has three arched alcoves, each with a pair of tall, narrow windows that double as arrow slits.

34. Parlor. This room contains a few items of interest. It has a broken desk along the west wall and an unlocked wooden chest in the southeast corner. The chest contains some old shirts and a book of elven poetry with most of the pages torn out. The desk drawers are broken and scattered around the room, and they contain nothing of value. There are two rickety rocking chairs against the east wall, one on either side of a moldy couch. The cushions and panels of the couch have been recently slit by a knife, and the rotten stuffing has been thrown everywhere, as if someone was looking for something. That someone was MacDaer, who tore the room apart looking for his mother's spell books and notes.

35. Workroom. This area was evidently once used as a workroom of some sort. The large, L-shaped workbench remains, extending from the northeast corner to the center of the room. Along the east wall are cabinets and shelves, and there is a small fire pit in the southeast corner. The cabinets no longer have doors and contain only pieces of broken glassware and pottery shards. The shelves contain a few empty boxes, a 50′-long coil of rope, and about 20 old books. These books may have been valuable once but are now nearly all rotted or chewed away by rats.

If the PCs are in this room during the day, they will also encounter the room's inhabitants, five **huecuvas** (AC 3; MV 9″; HD 2; hp 15, 14 (×2), 9, 6; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA disease; SD hit only by silver or magical weapons, immune to mind-influencing spells, able to *polymorph self* three times a day; AL CE). These were brought to the ruins by MacDaer for use as guardians. During the day, the huecuvas are *polymorphed* into human shape and wear rotting brown monks' robes. Each evening at dusk, however, the huecuvas change into the form of blood hawks (see area 40) and seek victims in the surrounding area. If they take any damage while *polymorphed,* the huecuvas immediately revert to their true forms. This change takes only five segments and restores 1-12 hit points. The touch of a

whips violently through this room, making movement near the edge dangerous; treat this effect as a *push* spell of level 1-12, occurring on a 5% chance per round. In the southeast corner of the room a 5'-wide stairway ascends 25' to the roof hatch, barred from the inside. There is nothing of interest on the roof.

40. Bedroom. This 17' × 30' room is in total shambles. Once a bedroom for the evil sorceress who was MacDaer's mother, this area is now the lair of 11 **blood hawks** (AC 7; MV 24"; HD 1+1; hp 9 (×2) 7, 6, 5, 4 (×3), 3, 2 (×2); #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-6; AL N). These birds attack humans in the party first, in preference to other races. Scattered in the nests are 10 gems: a 200-gp amethyst (deep purple), a 50-gp chrysoprase (dark green), and eight 15-gp banded agates (brown and white striped).

There is a wooden peg about 4' off the floor in the wall of the southern alcove. A silver key hangs from the peg by an iron ring. This key fits the door leading to the crypts at area 44 of the cellar.

Cellar Level

Unless otherwise noted, the floors on this level are stone and the walls are carved into existing rock. The ceilings are generally from 15-20' high and are rock and earth above wooden bracing. The air is damp and musty, smelling faintly of decay. The main hallway is about 45' below ground level.

41. Cellar Hall. At the base of the stairs from area 19 is a large hallway. Inset into the north wall are four alcoves, each 5' wide with 8'-tall arched openings. Each alcove is 3' deep and contains a troll's skull nailed to the back wall with an iron rod, 6' off the ground. Whenever someone is within 10' of an alcove, the inside of the skull glows brightly (equal to a *light* spell), shining through the eye and mouth openings to light the hall. This is an old spell cast by the sorceress, and tampering with the skulls or pegs ruins the magic.

There are two stairways leading from this hall. To the south, the main stairway goes up to the ground floor. To the east, a collapsed stairway once led to the laboratory and study. The ceiling above this stairway is very unstable, and a sudden air-pressure change or physical blow has a 25% chance to cause part of the ceiling to fall, doing 1-12 hp damage to everyone on the steps. At the entrance to both stairways are wolf-headed statues similar to those in area 20, but these are much smaller.

42. Well Room. There is a water well at the west end of the passage, with 100' of moldy rope and a rusty drawing bucket. The water is 65' down and appears clear and cold. It will, however, make anyone drinking it helpless from nausea for 1-6 rounds unless a save vs. poison is made. The well was poisoned with deadly herbs long ago, but it has begun to purify itself in the last 100 years. The area marked A on the map is a shaft with a ladder that extends up to area 20 and down to a collapsed hallway below. The hallway below is 10' wide and 25' long but leads only to rubble. It is the lair of a **coffer corpse** (AC 8; MV 6"; HD 2; hp 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 or by weapon type; SD only damaged by magical weapons; AL CE). The coffer corpse's treasure includes 830 cp, 760 sp, and a *short sword +1, +3 vs. lycanthropes and shape changers,* that was thrown down the shaft by the doppelgangers who lair in area 11. The coffer corpse was the body of a defender of the castle, dumped here after a hasty burial ceremony as the castle was falling to the enemy.

The skull in the alcove directly to the north of the poisoned well has a permanent *magic mouth* spell on it. Whenever someone draws water from the well, the light inside the skull flashes three times and the skull says:

> "Beneath the keep, a place to scry,
> Where demons sing their songs, then die.
> As deep, cold wells keep waters fresh,
> So keeps she all her wickedness."

The "place to scry" refers to the destroyed lab, and the songs of demons were their cries of anguish as the sorceress Demara tortured them for information. The deep well symbolizes the stairway to the caverns below where the dragons ("her wickedness") live.

43. Living Quarters. This room was where slaves who worked in Nol-Daer slept at night. The slaves shared this room, sleeping on crude cots and hoarding what little food they could steal from the kitchen. Except for some rotted bedding and a broken chair, this room is empty.

44. Intersection. Just north of the main cellar hallway is this four-way intersection. To the north and east are normal wooden doors, but to the west is an odd portal, a large, heavy door with strange skeletal figures carved in bas-relief. The door is locked (normally) and is also *wizard locked* (at the 18th level of spell use). The key for the door can be found in area 40.

45. Storeroom. Once the storeroom for dry goods and supplies, this room is now filled with smashed crates and cobwebs. There is a heavy layer of dust on the floor, disturbed only by recent footprints along the perimeter of the room. These are the cambion's, made as he searched for secret doors. There is nothing here of value.

46. Storeroom. Unusually cool, this room was once the food and wine storage area. There are a few hooks hanging from the ceiling in the northwest corner and some empty wine racks, but the room is otherwise empty.

47. Stairway. The door from area 44 opens into a 20'-high passageway leading to the west and down. After 15', the stairs turn north and descend steeply. They then turn back to the west and end in another door which sits ajar. The stairs are normal stone stairs, worn smooth in places from heavy use. The only unusual thing about the northbound section of stairway is the great number of humanoid skeletons lying to the sides of the steps, as if piled there. There are 35 orcish skeletons present, all showing signs of having been gnawed to the bone.

As the party reaches the crypt door at the base of the stairs, an insubstantial skeletal figure in a thin, white robe glides through the door, surprising the party on a roll of 1-5 on 1d6. This is the main guardian of the crypt, an **apparition** (AC 0; MV 24"; HD 8; hp 40; #AT 1; Dmg by suggestion; SD silver or magical weapon to hit; AL CE). The sorceress Demara placed the apparition here with other undead guards to prevent the crypts of her ancestors from being disturbed.

48. Crypt. During the final battle for Nol-Daer, some of the orcish invaders gained entrance through a now-collapsed tunnel. Rushing up the stairs to engage the defending forces, they

found instead the castle crypts — and their guardians. Some of the invaders were lucky enough to be killed immediately, while others were captured and eaten alive by ghouls and ghasts.

If the PCs make any noise on the stairwell, the undead in this area gather around the door to await their arrival. The moment the door is opened, the undead try to force their way into the stairwell (area 47) to *paralyze* as many invaders as possible.

The current occupants of the crypt include four **ghouls** (AC 6; MV 9″; HD 2; hp 13, 12, 11, 9; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; SD immune to *sleep, charm* spells; AL CE), five **ghasts** (AC 4; MV 15″; HD 4; hp 23, 21, 20 (×2), 11; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-8; SA paralyzation, carrion stench; SD immune to *sleep, charm* spells; AL CE), five **shadows** (AC 7; MV 12″; HD 3+3; hp 17 (×3), 12, 10; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SA strength drain; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; AL CE), and 11 **skeletons** (AC 7; MV 12″; HD 1; hp 8, 6 (×2), 5 (×2), 4 (×2), 3 (×3), 2; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SD half damage from sharp or edged weapons, immune to *sleep, charm, hold* and cold-based spells; AL N).

The first thing the party notices upon opening the door is the stench from the ghasts. If a saving throw vs. poison is unsuccessful, all rolls "to hit" are made at −2, and spell-casting (including clerics' attempts to turn undead) may be delayed because of retching and nausea. Because of the evil nature of the crypts, all turning by clerics therein is at a penalty of −1. If successfully turned, the affected undead are destroyed or flee into the crypt alcoves, depending on the level of the cleric.

The floor of the crypt is littered with corroded orcish armor and weapons mixed with trash and bleached bones. There are four small side passages that lead to burial vaults. For each 5′-wide vault on the map, there are two 3′-square doors, one above the other. Each small door opens into a 4′ × 4′ × 7′ burial chamber, most of which are occupied. One of the sets of doors, however, is a false front leading to a hidden stairway to the outdoors, now destroyed. If the party searches the burial chambers, roll for their contents on the following table:

1d100	Results
01-60	Skeleton in tattered robes with no treasure
61-90	Skeleton in rotted leather armor with 1-12 gp and 2-24 sp
91-98	Skeleton in chain mail, with long sword and shield*
99-00	Dust, dirt, and dead rats

* Weapons and armor are normal equipment in good condition, and because of their antiquity may actually be worth more than usual.

If the party finds the false doors that reveal the secret stairwell, they encounter yet another lost soul of the crypts, a **haunt** (AC 0/victim's AC; MV 6″/as possessed victim; HD 5/victim's HD; hp 25/victim's hp; #AT 1/1 as 5 HD monster; Dmg dexterity drain/by weapon type; SA possession; SD see FIEND FOLIO tome, pages 74-75; AL LE). This is the restless spirit of the half-orc lieutenant who led the group that died here. His vital task was to open the portcullis in area 18, allowing the invaders entry to the keep; he met the apparition instead. The haunt's sole purpose is to possess a living body and complete this unfinished task.

The haunt first appears as a translucent image of a large man in plate mail. If the party has not encountered a haunt before, there is a 75% chance that one of the clerics will "recognize" it as a spectre. It is not, of course, and may not be turned. The haunt's former body is shallowly buried in the rubble on the stairs, wearing bronze *plate mail +1* (man-size). The armor is dented and scratched but still in useable condition. It takes four rounds to completely unearth the armor.

49. Jermlaine Complex. There are a total of 25 jermlaine in the entire castle. Four posted at area 23, and 1-12 are in area 9 (see area 9 for their statistics). From 1-8 jermlaine are out exploring the surrounding forest, and the remainder are camped here. It is up to the individual DM to keep track of the number and exact location of each, as well as having them fight and defend themselves intelligently.

Two jermlaine guards (hp 3, 4) are posted at area A. One of these carries a small horn and blows it to announce intruders. Each carries a small spear and has no treasure.

Area B is the storage room and prisoner quarters. Currently it contains nine flasks of oil, six torches, lots of rope and tiny weapons, and the skeleton of an unlucky sprite. Prisoners small enough to navigate the tunnels are dragged here and stripped naked, to be left in the courtyard at dusk for the blood hawks.

Area C is the meeting room. It has several small stools and chairs, as well as a tiny pen filled with newborn mice.

Area D is the living quarters for the jermlaine. They sleep on stone shelves cut into the walls, much like bunk beds. Scraps of food and straw are strewn about, and each jermlaine has a few copper coins hidden in its bedding. At the west end of the room is a large unlocked chest that stores the community's wealth. The chest holds 228 cp, 832 sp, 238 ep, 58 gp, and two pink ceramic flasks sealed with wax that contain potions of *diminution.*

Cavern Level

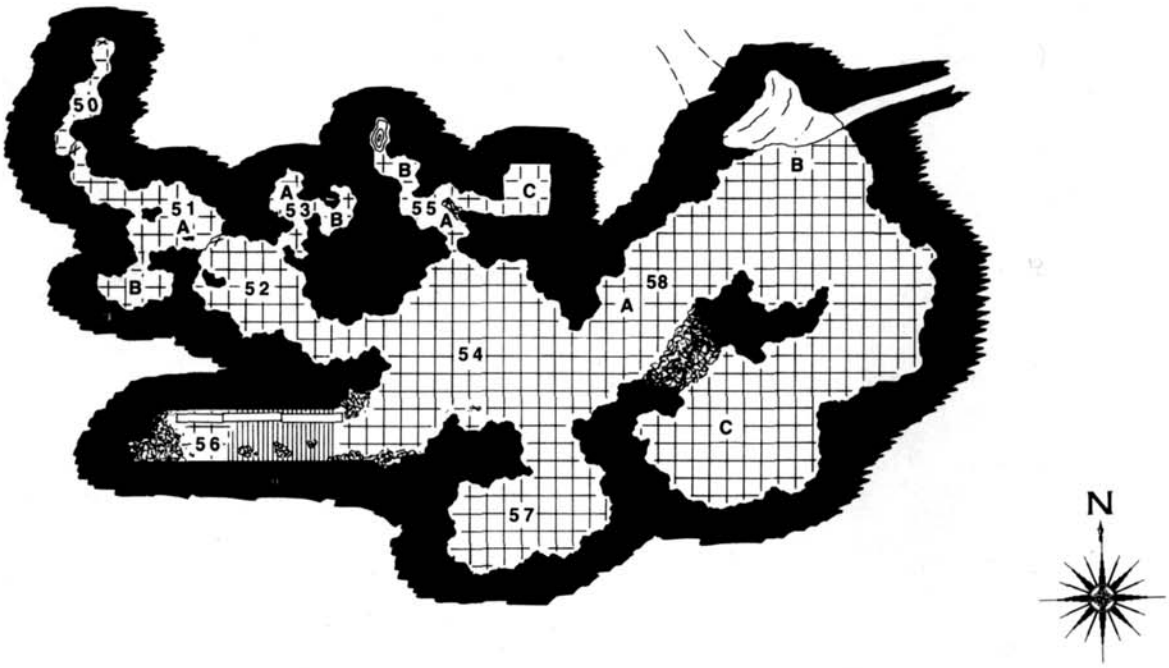
The underground cavern beneath Nol-Daer was once easily accessible from the surface, but cave-ins and erosion have narrowed the entrance to less than 4′ wide in some portions. The cavern is natural limestone with light-gray stone formations and is fairly damp. Stalactites hang from the ceiling, which ranges from 6′-40′ in height.

50. Cavern Entrance. The only practical entrance to these caves is a 4′-diameter hole in the ground, located at the base of a large elm tree 150′ northeast of the castle. A rope ladder, tied to the gnarled roots of the elm, descends 25′ into the depths below. At the bottom of the ladder, a narrow earthen passage slopes 15′ down to the south. Thirty feet along, the passage ends in a ledge overlooking a larger cavern (area 51). Eight large iron spikes are driven into the ledge here, and they support another rope ladder extending to the floor 35′ below.

In the castle's former days, this entrance was carefully concealed by traps and illusions. All such defenses have vanished with time, leaving the entrance open to the elements.

51. Spriggan Outpost. Unless the party is very quiet in area 50 and while descending the rope ladder, the guard behind the rock at A alerts his partner at B (moving silently), then starts toward area 55 to notify the cambion of intruders. The second guard quaffs one

CAVERNS



1 square = 5′

dose from a bottle containing a potion of *invisibility* (leaving three doses), climbs the wall, and waits for the intruders to pass (hoping for an opportunity to backstab one later).

If the party has been extremely quiet and surprises them, the guards assume giant size and fight, making as much noise as possible with shouts and catcalls. These guards are two **spriggans** (AC 3 [5]; MV 9″ [15″]; HD 4 [8+4]; hp 18, 14 [32, 28]; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type [2-8/2-8]; SA spells, thief abilities; SD see *Monster Manual II,* page 113; AL CE; statistics in brackets are for giant form; studded leather armor).

The area marked B on the map is where the guards sleep in alternating shifts. It contains a bedroll, a small bench, a table with partially eaten rations, and three empty wineskins. The spriggans have been told to allow the hermit's sons (now actually disguised dopplegangers; see area 11) to pass freely, but to sound the alert when strangers enter the cavern.

As the party reaches the east edge of area 51, another ledge comes into view, opening onto a much larger area. This ledge also has a rope ladder that extends to the floor, 40′ down. During the night hours, this section of the cavern is fairly quiet, the loudest sound being the gurgling of a natural spring. During the day, however, the water's noise is covered by the faint echoes of shouts and breaking rocks.

Descending the ladder to area 52 takes two rounds. Note the ambush at area 52 if the PCs start down the ladder.

52. Ambush. Unless the PCs have somehow succeeded in being silent to this point, there is an ambush waiting for them when they attempt to climb down the rope ladder here. Two spriggans (hp 34, 21 [41, 37]; see area 51) from area 53 take positions behind rock outcroppings in order to fire at the intruders. They fire short bows (twice each round at short range) at PCs descending the ladder. They attack as 8th-level thieves with 18 dexterity (+3 to hit with missile fire) and are firing *arrows +1* (each spriggan here has six magical arrows). Remember that in climbing down the ladder, a PC turns his back to the attackers, negating any armor class bonus due to a shield or dexterity. Since they are firing from 50% cover, the spriggans have an effective armor class versus missile fire of −1. If more than two intruders reach the ground safely, the spriggans turn and flee toward area 54.

53. Spriggans' Quarters. These two small chambers are where the spriggans spend time when not on guard duty. In the area marked A on the map, three chairs sit around a wooden table taken from the ruins above. On the table are various rusty instruments of torture and a small silver case containing thieves picks and tools. The spriggans' treasure is in a small chest against the wall, locked with an ornate padlock (−10% chance to *pick locks).* The chest contains 670 ep, a small leather pouch, and a silver scroll case. The leather pouch holds 27 gold fillings from dwarf teeth (worth 9 gp), and the scroll in the case has one illusionist spell, *detect invisibility,* written at the 9th level of spell use.

Area B contains four smelly bedrolls and some soiled and lice-infested dwarven clothing. There is nothing of value here.

54. Main Cavern. This large open area has the highest ceiling in the entire cave complex, reaching to 40′ in the center. The floor is littered with broken rocks and dust, and there are hundreds of footprints extending in all directions. If they hear the PCs coming, the cavern inhabitants are not in the center of this area, preferring to flee into areas 55, 56, or 57. During working hours, there are from 1-6 **manes demons** (AC 7; MV 3″; HD 1; hp 8, 5 (×2), 4, 3, 2; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-4; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; AL CE) in this area. They have instructions to kill any creature under 5′ tall attempting to enter area 52. This prevents dwarves from escaping while allowing free passage for others. The manes limp up to creatures entering this area in order to examine them, but attack only those under 5′ tall who are trying to leave. If the PCs do not initiate melee, the manes won't bother them (until later).

Any spriggans who enter this area when the manes are about are mindful to change themselves to giant-size when attempting to leave. If forced into this area by combat, spriggans have a 10% chance each to forget to do this if heading back into area 52 — producing predictable results if a manes demon sees them.

55. Cambion's Quarters. If any spriggans have escaped the party, they are hiding here (or in area 56). There is a low stone wall at point A on the map, from behind which spriggans continue to fire arrows at intruders (using normal arrows when magical arrows are gone). This area is filled with the pungent odor of fresh manure, and PCs' eyes begin to water heavily. The reason for this stench is area B, a natural sinkhole used for discarding bodies and waste materials. The sinkhole extends 60′ down to a small cavern but contains nothing of interest.

The chamber marked C on the map is MacDaer's room. He likes this chamber and says it reminds him of home — probably because of the smell. Against the north wall is a wooden bed with a feather mattress. The large headboard is carved oak and depicts a demonic landscape. The room also contains a large writing desk and a partially finished stone bookcase against the east wall. Scattered about on the desk are papers MacDaer has salvaged from the ruins above — faded letters, memos, and instructions — all with little value. On the two finished shelves of the bookcase are several books and an ornately carved bull horn. The horn is nonmagical and simply used to wake the dragons when necessary.

All of the books (except for one) are in poor condition and deal with demonology. A few have notes scrawled in their margins, but most of the writing is too smudged to read. If the cambion has not taken it away with him, one of the books is bound in metal and covered with a thin, red animal skin. This is MacDaer's spell book, containing *read magic, enlarge, hold portal, write, identify, protection from good, magic missile, sleep, mirror image, magic mouth, rope trick, stinking cloud, darkness 15′ radius, lightning bolt, monster summoning I,* and *slow.*

When the cambion is first alerted, he asks his minions to describe the appearance and relative strength of the intruders. If the PCs gain entrance to area 54, he attempts to summon demonic protection with his amulet. The summoned creatures are 1-2 **dretch demons** (AC 2; MV 9″; HD 4; hp 23 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/2-5; SA magic use; SD 30% magic resistance; AL CE). The cambion instructs these demons to kill anyone entering the room without his permission. A dretch demon's favorite tactic is to cast *stinking clouds* at point-blank range, then attack the helpless victims, since the spell does not affect the demons.

The cambion would much rather let the dragons handle any threat to cavern security (after all, it *is* their cavern). However, if he determines that he may be in any danger whatsoever, MacDaer casts his *rope trick* spell and watches from the safety of an extradimensional space, even if his room is ransacked and his demons are killed. He makes plans to kill the intruders later, perhaps with a *lightning bolt* thrown while *invisible* (one learns tactics early when growing up in the Abyss).

56. New Stairway. This stairway is being excavated by dwarven slaves. During designated work hours, 10 dwarves toil here, slowly building a 15′-wide, 20′-high stairway up to the destroyed cellar sections. Almost 30′ of stairway is already completed, and another 20′ has been roughed out. The dwarves carefully measure the rock, break chunks of it loose with hammers, then slide the debris down a makeshift ramp. The pieces of rock are then carried to area 58, where a new protective wall is being built. Two **spriggans** (hp 21 each [41 each]; see area 51 for statistics) supervise the excavation. During night hours, the spriggans guard the entrance to area 57.

Enslaved dwarves (10): AC 10; MV 6″; HD 1; hp 2-8 each; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL LG, LN, or N; ragged clothing, hammers. The dwarves are enraged at their captivity but work silently, dwelling upon the apparent hopelessness of their situation. If a strong party of PCs arrives and fights the evil beings in this area, the dwarves spontaneously attack the spriggans with +1 to hit and damage rolls, fighting to the death. Survivors then join the PCs until they reach the surface, whereupon the dwarves leave for their mining camp. The 10 dwarves here are the only survivors out of a total of 16 such slaves.

57. Slave Chamber. This side cave is where the dwarves are kept at night. There is some straw scattered on the ground in the southeast section that serves as bedding. Sick or injured dwarves are allowed two days to recover, then thrown to the dragons. There is nothing of value in the straw, and no dwarves are here at the moment.

58. Dragon Cave. This section of the cavern serves as the lair for a mated pair of **black dragons** (AC 3; MV 12″/24″; HD 7; hp 49 (very old average male), 26 (old average injured female, full hp 42); #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/3-18; SA breath weapon, *fear* aura; SD acute senses to *detect hidden/invisible creatures*, high intelligence, saving-throw bonus; AL CE). The female was badly injured in a cave-in and is recovering slowly. The male is in excellent health, however, and often lies at the location marked A in order to observe the cavern's daily activities. He knows that his acid spittle can easily reach the edges of areas 52, 55, 56, and 57, and remains partially concealed if intruders arrive. If attacked, the dragon breathes twice, then moves to melee. The female dragon spends most of her time sleeping in the area marked C but is awakened by any noise of fighting in the main cavern. She takes two rounds to rouse herself and enter the fray, attacking with a penalty of −2 to hit and damage

for the first two combat rounds.

The area on the map between A and C is a new wall the dwarves are building with the rubble from the stairway. The wall is already 20′ tall, thus preventing the injured female dragon from entering area 54 immediately.

At area B on the map, an underground spring of cool, clear water opens into the cave and flows out through a small cave to the east. The flow creates a draft that pulls fresh air into the cave. The pool and spring hide nothing of value and contain only a few blind cave fish.

Section C is the dragons' lair. Unlike most dragon caves, this area is extremely well kept — no messy corpses or loose coins strewn about. Since the dragons have a ready supply of housekeepers, they often order the dwarves to sweep the floor or count the coins in one of the chests (again).

The dragons' treasure is contained in two large crates and five chests. The first crate contains two large shields (Viking kite shield type) and a *shield +2* made of a mithral-steel alloy with a roaring lion tooled on the front. This crate also holds a suit of man-size chain mail, a dwarf-size suit of splinted mail, and a man-size suit of *plate mail +1*. The second crate contains seven suits of dwarven leather armor, a *spear +1*, and 16 *arrows +1*.

A large oak chest holds 3,450 sp, 1,076 ep, and 5,368 gp. Another wooden chest is filled with 2,497 cp, 2,115 sp, and 853 ep. The third chest is iron and holds 3,400 sp and 6,300 gp. The fourth chest is also iron but has silver trim on the corners and handles. It contains three items carefully wrapped in cloth. The first is an old ivory scroll case that contains a scroll of *protection from lycanthropes*. The second is a silver comb with a carved dragon's head handle set with a ruby for the eye (1,015 gp value). The third is a harp with an ivory inlaid bridge and two tiny aquamarine eyes (100 gp each) on the carved wolf's head at the peak of the instrument. The harp has 36 strings and produces beautiful music. It is constructed of an unknown wood and does not radiate magic (worth 500 gp, or up to 2,000 gp to a bard).

The last chest is made of red enameled iron with gold trim. It contains two potions of *extra healing* and 25 gems. These include four deep-green pieces of jade (100 gp each), 10 red-and-white banded sardonyxes (worth 50 gp each), six blue-and-brown jaspers (45 gp each), and five black hematites (6 gp each).

Concluding the Adventure

The majority of the monsters present at the ruins will tend to stay or return there unless destroyed or met with overwhelming force. The intelligent monsters will tend to stick together in a roving, ill-commanded band for a short time if driven away. Some of these monsters may turn up in later adventures as minor encounters, though their previous knowledge of the PCs could prove helpful to the PCs' enemies.

The most dangerous foes are the dragons and MacDaer. The dragons want their freedom, and if given such will eventually come to terrorize the countryside in the manner that dragons are wont to do. MacDaer is a trickier and more dangerous opponent, as he may eventually return to harass or destroy the PCs, given half a chance. He still wishes to become more powerful and may eventually forge an army of monsters to do his bidding, should he

decide to stay on the Prime Material plane and gain temporal power.

Should MacDaer's plans to excavate his mother's laboratory go uninterrupted, he will reach the lab three weeks after the PCs arrive at Nol-Daer. The laboratory contains many sorts of powerful magical devices that MacDaer can use himself, as well as his mother's spell books, which were designed for an 18th-level magic-user (Demara's final level). At the DM's option, some of these magical devices may increase MacDaer's spell-casting and spell-storing abilities, making him a much more dangerous and versatile foe (e.g., a *ring of spell-storing, libram of ineffable damnation, book of infinite spells,* etc.).

Nothing is known of Demara's fate, but it is possible that either her skeleton or her living body (in some magical suspended animation) is still within the laboratory. PCs who finish MacDaer's excavation may have some unpleasant surprises waiting for them in the lab.

New Magical Items

Gordon's Magic Ring

Gordon's magic ring can be both a blessing and a curse to its owner. Sages disagree as to the origin of the ring, but all feel that it has abilities not yet revealed. Levalsa of Enstad, in her much acclaimed *Treatise on Mystical Rings,* links the origin of the ring to an unnamed demigod who enjoyed toying with the lives of mortal men. Arrivas of Greyhawk, on the other hand, feels that the ring was once a powerful magical ring but was damaged by a *curse.*

This magical item appears to be a finely tooled gold ring with a human face carved on one side. The eyes of the ring are tiny red garnets (40 gp value each). On the inside of the band, the name "Gordon of Red Falcon" is inscribed in elvish script. The ring radiates magic but does not detect as good or evil. The intensity of the magic detected is always dim, and the type of magic can never be determined. *Identify* spells cast on the ring always reveal false powers (as if the saving throw were one point short).

Gordon's magic ring can speak elvish, gnome, dwarvish, halfling, thieves' cant, hill giant, ogrish, and the common tongue. It can even change the features on its carved face to smile, frown, grimace, etc. It has the power to *levitate* its wearer, at 12th level of spell use. It is not a living entity, but it does display exceptional cleverness for a magical item (role-play as if it had an intelligence rating of 10). It is very friendly, even to known enemies, and strikes up a conversation whenever possible.

Sounds like a nice ring? It would be, except that the ring is a habitual liar. Always craving more adventure, it promises the world but never delivers. For example, it once belonged to a halfling who had unfortunately been captured by a troll. The poor halfling, critically injured and bound, sat awaiting a horrible fate in the troll's filthy lair when the ring proudly announced that it was a *ring of wishes.* "I wish I was back at home then," cried the hairfoot, "and that I had never crossed this stupid bridge!" The ring chanted a few impressive-sounding words, closed its glowing red eyes, and even sweated a little. "Oops," it said. "I must have already used up that ability for this month. Anything else I could do?"

Although the ring claims to be able to do almost anything, if in danger of being destroyed or removed it may actually *levitate* the wearer (20% chance), whether that action helps or not. It never *levitates* on command, however, claiming it doesn't remember how to activate that particular ability.

The ring is *cursed* so that it can only be easily removed from dead creatures. A PC wishing to be rid of the ring, once put on, must have a *silence* spell thrown on the ring, followed by *dispel magic* and *remove curse.* The ring saves as a 12th-level fighter and operates at the 12th-level of magic-use. Of course, if the adventurer dies, the ring comes off easily.

XP Value: Nil **GP Sale Value:** 2,000

Amulet of the Abyss

On the Prime Material plane, an *amulet of the Abyss* is indeed rare, but it is an item commonly worn by honored guests when traveling through certain layers of the Abyss. The amulet consists of a 36″ silver chain from which hangs a disk of tooled adamantite about 3″ in diameter. Some type of identifying mark is placed on the amulet's front, and its back is inscribed (in the demon tongue) with the name of the wearer and the areas to which he is allowed access. The amulet in this adventure bears the image of a long sword grasped by a tentacle (MacDaer's assigned symbol). The amulet radiates magic and a strong

aura of evil.

The amulet enables the wearer to summon demonic aid twice per day. At the wearer's option, it may summon 1-6 manes or 1-2 dretch demons. All summoning is done indirectly through Arzial, a demon baron serving under Graz'zt, and is subject to possible denial. If approved, the summoned creatures serve without question and remain for 3-18 hours or until dismissed. The summoning requires 1-8 rounds, depending on the speed of the baron's answer. The summoning may be performed only by evil persons with knowledge of the correct phrasing and demon names. Any neutral PC attempting to summon creatures suffers 1-10 hp damage per attempt. Any PC of good alignment suffers 3-24 hp damage, and there is a 10% chance of attracting the attention of Arzial. The amulet may be used to communicate with Arzial directly, once per month, with two questions per contact. The answers received are not always correct, and Arzial dislikes frequent contact.

XP Value: 2,000 **GP Sale Value:** 6,000

(continued on page 64)

LETTERS

(continued from page 2)

Mixed Reviews

Congratulations on the first two years of DUNGEON® Adventures. However, I have one or two points to make.

Please, no more solo adventures. If I wanted this sort of thing, I could buy an adventure gamebook. Apart from that, it wastes space that could be put to better use printing AD&D® or D&D® game adventures, which are primarily group pursuits.

I read that back issues of DUNGEON Adventures numbers 3 and 4 are out of print. As these are two of the three I haven't got, I think it would be a very good idea to get the presses rolling again. I know of several people who would be very eager to get their sticky little fingers on copies, including myself. Also, as DRAGON Magazine has recently set up a printing circuit in England, I would like to know if any plans for the same for DUNGEON Adventures are being harboured.

Introducing a bit of zany spice into the AD&D game occasionally makes for great playing sessions. This was mirrored perfectly in "Monsterquest" (issue #10) by Vince Garcia. Unfortunately, he was the same one who also wrote the solo adventure in issue #9.

I think you have achieved a good mix of modules, with a few hiccup adventures. These are made up for, however, by more than a few incredible, brilliant modules such as "Into the Fire" and "Assault on Eddistone Point" (issue #1), "Hirward's Task" (issue #5), "Forbidden Mountain" (issue #6), and "Monsterquest" (issue #10), all of which are well written and present many new and interesting ideas.

All credit also to the contributing artists who add that little something else to the magazine.

P.S. Do Grant and David Boucher have a fixation with dragons?

Matthew N. Eames
Norwich, England

We understand your frustration at not being able to purchase certain back issues, but the cost of reprinting them is prohibitive. You might try looking for used copies at games conventions or in hobby shops.

There are no plans at present to print DUNGEON Adventures outside the United States.

Upcoming Boucher adventures include wererats, frost giants, and — yes — a dragon.

"Whipping Up" a Good Adventure

I can't help feeling irritated about Jennifer Martire's letter in issue #12. It is true that any DM can "whip up" an adventure. It is *not* true that any DM can "whip up" a *good* adventure. I'll agree that it is harder to write high-level modules, but this leads to another stumbling block: low- and mid-level modules have a lot more competition when submitted to DUNGEON Adventures. Having authored two low- and mid-level adventures accepted by DUNGEON Adventures, I know that this is not something you do casually on a day off. Each module required several rough drafts, playtesting, revision, more playtesting, more revision, and a final draft. To anyone who thinks it's easy, I say try it yourself. You might be successful and be published, but it won't be something you "whipped up."

I, too, would like to see an epic three- or four-part adventure in the magazine, with self-contained but loosely connected adventures similar to the GDQ series of modules. This would be a daunting task for the writer and a nightmare for the editors, but it would be interesting, if kept on a par with TSR's multipart series.

Finally, there is a problem with DUNGEON Adventures' frequency. I enjoy reading modules, even if I don't run them. I realize that it is not feasible to make DUNGEON a monthly magazine, but couldn't you arrange for DRAGON® Magazine to print a module in the interim months?

David Howery
Dillon, Montana

Likes to Go It Alone

My sincere compliments go out to you on DUNGEON® Magazine. Your ability to find excellent, varied adventures of all levels, combined with the fact that you take the chance to publish solo adventures, makes you tops in the role-playing games magazine field.

I've read lots of letters from other readers with negative feelings about solo adventures, and I keep asking "why?". Solo adventures are equally as challenging as any other game in the facts that you have limitations (in choice of action as well as in magic and encumbrance) and no one else to consult with on course of action. Consider them as a very good way to introduce non-D&D players to the action, adventure, magic and treasure without forcing the new person to spend several hours rolling and developing a new character and suffering through several books of rules and guidelines only to find that s/he doesn't really care for it. Besides, not everyone that does enjoy gaming likes to do *all* of it as role playing, hence solo adventures serve to fill these people's desires. Personally, I find it inspiring to be able to die due to my own stupidity and bad luck as opposed to someone else's.

I do not suppose that any magazine can satisfy 100% of everyone's needs or wants all of the time, but thanks for trying!

Deborah Lintz
Omaha, Nebraska

Manuscript Mailing

I recently submitted a module to you and ran into a little problem when I mailed it UPS. Since they don't deliver to post office box numbers, they needed a street address. I looked diligently throughout all the DUNGEON magazines and DUNGEON Guidelines, but I could not find a street address anywhere. I was hoping you could print the address in the magazine so that future submissions will not have the same problems as my first one did. Thanks lots.

D. Matthew Dobbins
Rochester, New York

Okay, I'll give you the street address if you promise not to use it for regular (U.S. Postal Service) mail: 201 Sheridan Springs Rd., Lake Geneva WI 53147. And don't forget to mail a proposal to our post office box for our approval before sending any completed manuscripts. Ω

GOING ONCE... GOING TWICE

BY PATRICIA NEAD ELROD

Auction fever can empty anyone's pouch of coins.

Artwork by Valerie Valusek

The Berkley Publishing Group recently accepted Pat's first two novels featuring her supernatural detective and his eccentric English sidekick, and has requested a third book by October 1st. Pat is, of course, in seventh heaven but reports that she is not giving up on writing modules. She also plans to use the advance money from her book sale to replace her old portable typewriter with a word processor. Welcome to the twentieth century, Pat!

"Going Once . . . Going Twice" is an AD&D® module that can be played by PCs of any level, alignment, or character class as long as they have money. When a DM feels he has been overly generous with treasure on previous campaigns, this scenario can provide an interesting method of parting the characters from their cash. The warehouse and NPCs described below may be incorporated into any large city in a DM's world, and he may also easily include any of his own favorite NPCs to spice up the play.

Adventure Background

As the PCs explore the streets of the city one fine spring morning, they encounter a large crowd of all classes and races milling freely around the front doors of a large green warehouse. There is a carnival atmosphere, with jugglers, peddlers, food vendors, and the occasional pickpocket trying to turn a profit. PCs asking anyone what is going on are told readily enough, or their attention is directed to a large sign posted next to the broad double doors. In the common tongue, it reads:

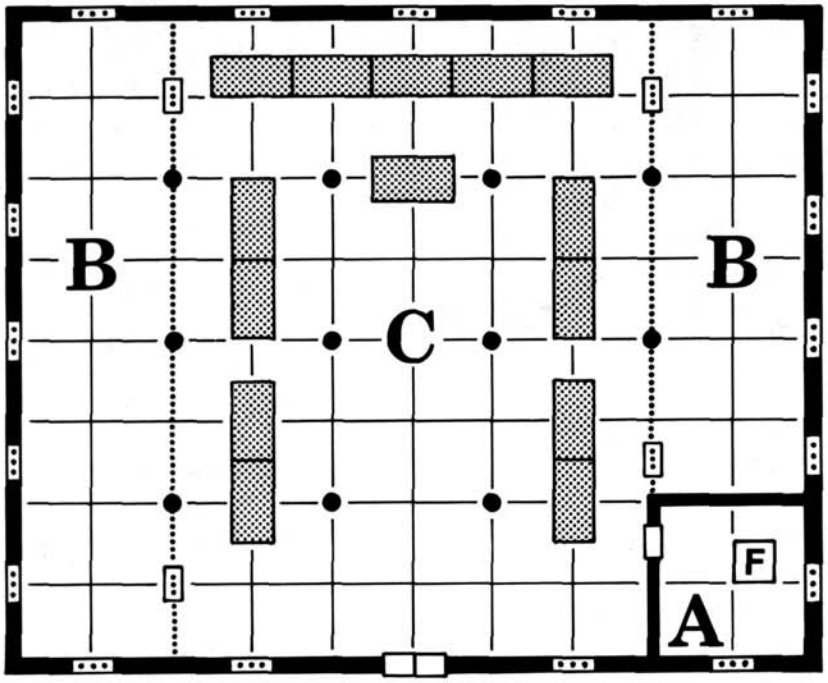
MAJOR AUCTION TODAY!
FURNISHINGS, CLOTHES, AND
*** ITEMS OF A MAGICAL NATURE! ***
GATES OPEN TO PUBLIC AT 9
AUCTION BEGINS AT 10 SHARP!
PROCEEDS GO TO CHARITY

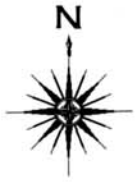
As the PCs look on (assuming that they have arrived right at the moment the auction is to begin), a nearby tower bell begins to ring. On the ninth peal, the doors swing wide and the crowd floods over the threshold.

For the Dungeon Master

About 50 years ago, a famous magic-user named Demetrius the Good moved into the area, bought an old keep at the edge of town, and settled down to do

GREEN FEATHER ASSOCIATES Auction Warehouse





1 square = 10'

some serious spell research. As the years passed, he trained apprentices, indulged in several pet projects, and grew embarrassingly rich from his services to the local nobility. A popular and well-known person, he is as famous for his many philanthropic ventures as he is for his magical abilities.

But 50 years have brought many changes, and the neighborhood isn't as quiet as it used to be. The empty fields around Demetrius's once-private keep are now filled with houses, inns, pubs, and small businesses overflowing from the growing city. For the last decade, he's been considering a move or retirement, but he has always put it off. Earlier this year, though, his friend Roland the Mixer, an alchemist in his employ, died of old age, and Demetrius finally decided to hang up his wizard robes for good. He plans to retire to a distant (and quiet) monastery and pursue the study of religion and philosophy, two interests for which he never previously had time.

Demetrius has already sold his keep and most of its furnishings, but still has to dispose of a lifetime of accumulated paraphernalia. He contacted Green Feather Associates, a local sales agency, and commissioned them to organize a major auction of all his goods that were not sold with the keep or given to charity. The Green Feather agents loaded everything into their wagons, transferred it to their warehouse, and posted flyers far and wide announcing the auction. The proceeds, minus the agent's 10% commission, are to be donated to several charities, including a hospital for the poor, a home for the elderly, an orphanage, and several good-aligned temples.

Word of the auction has spread quickly, and many of the local nobles and other wealthy citizens have turned out, wanting to contribute to a worthy cause and to gain not a little social prestige by being seen to do so. There are magic-users in abundance as well, many of them old friends of Demetrius who have come to bid their farewells to him even as they bid on his possessions.

No one knows what is going to go on the block, but all are excited and eager for things to start. The story of Demetrius's retirement is old news in this neighborhood, and if the PCs have spent a few days in the city, there is a 25% chance that one of them has heard a rumor or two. Old Demetrius led a pretty interesting life before he settled down here, and everyone feels he must have collected many strange and wondrous things. If the PCs have more specific questions, they are advised to speak to the auctioneers or perhaps to young Duncan, Demetrius's current apprentice.

Demetrius the Good: AC 7; MV 8"; MU 18; hp 27; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 10, I 18, W 15, D 12, C 13, Ch 15, Cm 13; AL NG; *ring of protection +3;* spells: *detect evil, charm person, magic missile, ESP, slow, fumble, Bigby's grasping hand.* Demetrius is in his 90s but looks 30 years younger. He has a broad forehead topped with snow-white shoulder-length hair, brushed straight back and held in place with a gold headband set with a ruby in its center. The headband is nonmagical and worth 2,000 gp. Demetrius is dressed in simple brown robes and, unless hailed by name by people he knows, prefers to blend in with the crowd and not call attention to himself. He carries few spells, not feeling that it is worth the bother to study for them anymore.

Demetrius is looking forward to his retirement and is preoccupied with the

coming trip. As soon as the auction proceeds are safely in the bank, he will depart for the monastery, where he will retire from spell-casting. Though he is giving most of his money away, he is taking along a goodly sum as a gift to the monks. The brothers are willing to let him remain for free because of his past services to their order (Demetrius and the abbot are old friends), but it would be most impolite to refuse such an offering and the good it can bring about. In addition to the headband, Demetrius has 3,000 gp in fine gems hidden on his person.

Duncan Dugglesby: AC 7; MV 12″; MU 1; hp 4; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 12, I 15, W 14, D 15, C 13, Ch 14, Cm 11; AL CG; *ring of protection +2;* spell: *charm person;* additional spells in book: *clean, exterminate, flavor, warm, dancing lights.* Twenty-year-old Duncan once lived in the very orphanage his master patronizes. Demetrius spotted his raw talent and took him on as an apprentice some 10 years ago. Though they sometimes have their differences, Duncan is intensely loyal to his master, who has been like the father he never knew. He plans to accompany Demetrius to the monastery to see that he's settled in properly. A trust fund has been set up to provide for Duncan's minimal needs until he's 30; then he inherits the entire amount, including Demetrius's fabled spell books. In the meantime, Duncan is eager to get out and explore the world to gain a bit of practical experience. PCs asking to buy or exchange spells will find that, despite his youth, he knows how to drive a good bargain.

The Warehouse

The building is a sturdy, two-storied wooden structure with a number of 5′-square windows placed 15′ above street level. The windows are protected by thick iron bars and wooden shutters. Each set of shutters may be opened and closed by its own simple cranking mechanism located at floor level on the inside. Today, all the shutters are open to admit light and air into the stuffy, barnlike interior.

Like many important buildings in large cities, this building has received some special protections against fire, magical or otherwise. A heavy coating of a fire-resistant paint reduces such damage to the point that a *fireball* has only a 5% chance of setting fire to the building per die of damage. The DM should consider other such effects if one or more PCs attempt (for whatever reason) to burn the building down.

A. Office. To the right of the front entrance is the office of Mr. T. Thomas Twillyfoot, the halfling owner of Green Feather Associates. This room is practically bursting with paperwork strewn in semiorganized stacks all over the desk, chairs, and numerous shelves. There is a secret trapdoor in the floor under the desk chair that opens to a very small brick-lined hole. In the hole is a locked metal strongbox that holds the most important paperwork relating to the business and 52 gp in loose change that serves as petty cash.

Mr. T. Thomas Twillyfoot: AC 10; MV 9″; zero-level halfling; hp 4; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 9, I 15, W 14, D 13, C 12, Ch 15, Cm 14; AL LN. Twillyfoot is a round, energetic little fellow who runs his large firm with contagious enthusiasm. He and his many agents are only too happy to sell anything for anybody as long as it's legal and there's a 10% commission for them. Mr. Twillyfoot is in an exceptionally good mood today, for his profits at the end of the auction should be quite high. He has a large staff of halflings and humans, all well paid and always on the lookout for someone with anything to buy or sell.

B. Storage. Along both sides of the building are secure storage areas protected by heavy iron bars set directly into the stone floor. The bars are 20′ high and connect with the ceiling rafters. The only easy access is through four barred doors, and these have heavy and complicated locks. Mr. Twillyfoot possesses one set of keys to them all, and his adopted daughter, Priscilla, has the other set.

Beyond the bars are all sizes and shapes of boxes, crates, barrels, and canvas-shrouded goods. Each has an identification label numbered in Twillyfoot's own code, but anyone with a few hours to spare and access to the office strongbox can figure it out. The code indicates who owns the item, its price, and whether it has been sold. The various goods are either for sale or have been sold and are awaiting shipment. From horse blankets to mustard plasters, the total worth of it all is over 100,000 gp, but no single item is worth more than 200 gp. Mr. Twillyfoot keeps his more valuable stock elsewhere in the city. Anyone interested in making a purchase must wait until after the auction to speak with Mr. Twillyfoot, as he is far too busy at the moment. (This gives the DM time to improvise with a little preparation, and it keeps the adventure moving along.)

Priscilla Twillyfoot, half-orc: AC 8; MV 12″; F1; hp 9; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, I 15, W 14, D 10, C 14, Ch 12, Cm 12; AL LN; leather armor, club, short sword, dagger. Priscilla is Mr. Twillyfoot's adopted half-orc daughter. She was left as a baby at the city orphanage, but no one would adopt the child because of her half-orc blood and looks. She grew up enduring the pranks and teasing of the other children. Twillyfoot saw one such incident in the local schoolyard and took immediate steps to adopt her.

Priscilla is a human-looking half-orc, towering over her adopted father. Her face has definite orcish features, but she makes the best of them with powder and eye paints. Her body is large but well proportioned and muscular. She makes a point to dress well and spares no expense when it comes to quality and style. Priscilla has short black hair and brilliant black eyes.

Priscilla is 25 years old now and very devoted to Twillyfoot. She learned fighting skills by training with the city guard for two years and became her father's full-time bodyguard and security advisor. Many of the guards at the auction are friends from her training days. Still reserved around strangers, she learned confidence from her parent and is no longer intimidated by teasing and name-calling. The other members of the staff are fond of her and are quick to respond to any unkind remarks directed toward her with a sharp reprimand.

C. Auction Floor. On a series of 13 trestle tables set up along the barred areas and the back wall are the items currently up for auction. Each table has an attendant sporting a bright green feather in his or her hat, and all are ready to answer questions about the goods offered and auction procedure.

Auction attendants (13): AC 10; MV 12″; zero-level humans and halflings; hp 3 each; #AT nil (unarmed); AL variable, but all are neutral or good.

Near the rear wall, set between two pillars, is another trestle table topped

with a short podium. It is from here that Mr. Twillyfoot will conduct the auction.

Everyone is invited to take a turn around the tables to inspect the goods. There are 11-16 uniformed **city guards** to control the crowds and keep an eye out for theft (AC 8; MV 12"; F2-5; hp 15-30; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL LG; leather armor, sap, short sword, dagger). Mingling with the crowds are 6-11 additional **city guards** (same statistics as above, with armor and weapons concealed) dressed as normal city dwellers. A 1st-level thief has a base chance of 25% (with a 10% increase per level of experience) to spot and identify these undercover guards as they are encountered. All other encounters can be rolled from the Encounters Matrix on page 191 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide.* Substitutions may be made for certain dice rolls, as drunks, ruffians, beggars, and other obvious riffraff will be turned away at the doors of the warehouse. It is suggested that about 300-400 people be present, the majority of them zero-level humans with a number of unremarkable demi-humans. Perhaps three dozen of those present are adventurers of varying levels, most of them magic-users.

Goods for the Block

The following list of items can serve as a guideline for the DM and may be thinned or augmented as he wishes. The minimum bid at the end of each description may be different from that listed in the *Players Handbook,* but this reflects the fine work, rarity, or high quality of each item. Demetrius bought and used only the best.

1. Six full-length woolen cloaks of extra-thick and heavy fabric in very good condition — red, blue, brown, green, grey, and black — with fine embroidery trim (10 gp each).
2. One crimson velvet robe with lots of pockets, trimmed with black sable, suitable for court wear (50 gp).
3. Two pairs of medium-sized walking boots of sturdy leather with fur lining, like new (4 gp per pair).
4. One set of fine china dishes, a full service for 12, made by the exclusive firm of Presden & Sons (500 gp).
5. Twelve fine-cut crystal wine goblets (50 gp for the set).
6. Three rare rugs from the fabled South, 10′ × 15′, with interesting patterns and colors (50 gp each).
7. One rare lacquered vase, antique (40 gp).
8. Twenty bottles of very fine white wine (15 gp for the lot).
9. Fifty bottles of extra-fine red wine (50 gp for the lot).
10. A complete set of beer-brewing equipment (5 gp).
11. A painting titled "The Seeker," by the legendary Michalardo L'Angelo, approximately 300 years old, oil on wood, measuring 2′ × 3′. The painting depicts several adventurers in antique clothes holding a map and pointing at a distant mountain. If the PCs ask about the painting's history, they are told it was commissioned to commemorate the founding of the House of Crompton's fortune. Lord Crompton the First was said to have gone on one final quest to the mountain depicted. He never returned. The painting hung on the walls of the family mansion for generations until it was sold to the gallery from which Demetrius bought it. Having once adventured near the location of the mountain, he always meant to return there but never got around to it. He does not know if the map, clearly visible in the painting, leads to some treasure hoard, though the Green Feather attendants might hint that it does. The DM can decide the truth himself (the painting is worth 5,000 gp).
12. Twelve empty cut-crystal bottles with stoppers, suitable for magic potions, sold as a lot with their own storage cases (100 gp).
13. Twenty pages of fine, clean parchment for inscribing spells for a spell book, wrapped in a waterproof oilcloth sheath and sold as a lot (70 gp).
14. Ten bottles of special ink for inscribing spells; each bottle contains enough ink to write two spells, and as long as the stoppers remain in place, the ink remains liquid indefinitely (150 gp per bottle).
15. Forty harpy quills good for use as pens to inscribe spells into spell books or onto magical scrolls (40 gp).
16. Twelve sheets of unblemished vellum, suitable for use in making spell scrolls, sold as a lot (90 gp).
17. Ink-making equipment — a small but very complete kit, with mortars and pestles, various measuring spoons, complete instructions, and Demetrius's own ink formula for the kind of ink used to inscribe spells into one's own spell book, not for magical scrolls (50 gp for the kit).
18. A complete alchemical laboratory, with everything a magic-user or alchemist could want to aid in magical research: fine quality flasks; retorts; braziers; measuring containers; several scales and counterweights; small and large bellows; stirring rods of gold, silver, and other fine metals; and many other useful items (a bargain starting at 1,200 gp).
19. *Cut-proof purse strings.* A magical item developed by Demetrius in response to a local crime wave, these are fine strings to be threaded through the loops of one's purse or bag and then hung from a belt. If there is any attempt to cut the string, it lets out a very loud buzzing noise, alerting the victim and startling the thief. These strings can be cut by magical blades only, but even so they still buzz their alarm. If successfully cut, a string loses its magical properties. The Green Feather people are happy to demonstrate these strings, but with ordinary blades only. Anyone who does the same with a magical blade destroys the product and must pay the base price plus 200 gp. Twelve of these magical purse strings are available at 1,000 gp each. (A quarter of the wealthy patrons at this auction already have these magical strings; thief PCs should beware!)
20. *Message wires.* These two pieces of copper wire are each about 6" long and as thick as a little finger. Each can send and receive vocal speech to the other at a maximum distance of 1,000′. The wires are activated by speaking the power words, "O Pan Shan Aldee." Two people may speak to each other for three segments (18 seconds) but no longer. The wires may be used once per hour, but the segments may not be divided up over this period. Demetrius developed this item so he could order food from his kitchen whenever he was deep in spell research and could not break away. He was tired of trudging down the stairs of his keep in search of a snack. The wires work through the thickest of stone or metal walls, but their power can be permanently negated by a *dispel magic* spell used against 18th-level magic (1,500 gp for both wires).
21. Five brass globes, each the size of a hen's egg and mounted on a sturdy wooden handle with a leather carrying thong looped through one end. Each globe has a *continual light* spell (18th

level) cast on it. These are not weapons, since a sudden shock (like using one for a club) causes the item to save vs. normal or crushing blow as a thin piece of wood; a failed saving throw means the handle has broken and done no damage. The globes may be removed from their holders and remounted onto something else without destroying their magic (300 gp each).

22. *Soap of refreshment.* Each one of these 10 magical bars is good for 25 baths. A good scrub once in 24 hours will restore 1 hp of damage in addition to any other hit points gained by normal or magical healing. A character in good health will feel brighter and, of course, very refreshed, even if he's been without rest for 24 hours. Also, the bather's comeliness goes up one point for five hours after bathing (100 gp per bar).

23. *No-pain tooth rinse.* A concentrated mouth rinse that can temporarily negate the pain of toothache for up to 10 hours. It does not cure the problem, but it makes the ache bearable. Demetrius once came down with a toothache in the middle of a major enchantment. With his concentration destroyed, he was unable to complete the spell and lost a whole month's work. There are 10 bottles of rinse with 10 doses in each bottle (50 gp per bottle).

24. *Location tags.* Often absent-minded, Demetrius invented these tags so he could easily locate his slippers or favorite robe. The inch-square tags are sewn onto any garment and thereafter respond to the name of the garment with a chirping sound like a loud cricket. Demetrius would call out "Slippers!" in a commanding tone, then follow the resulting sound. The chirping ceases as soon as the garment is found and the seeker says the word "Ah-hah!" The tags may be removed and placed on different garments as necessary without losing their magic. Ten tags are available at 100 gp each.

At the DM's option, perhaps 1-3 low-power magical items from the tables in the *DMG* or *Unearthed Arcana* may appear — but these should be *very* weak items. All the rest of the more powerful of Demetrius's possessions have already been purchased or given away. Some of the items are not going to appeal to all the PCs, and the DM is welcome to delete or substitute as he pleases.

The Auction

The pace of the auction should be fast, and minute descriptions of each item should be avoided. Walk the PCs through the displays and then, if they show any interest in certain lot numbers, put them up for bidding. If they ignore an item, just skip it. The DM might want to run a practice bid, though, so the players can get used to how the procedure is run.

Players wanting to know the regular price of any item are strongly discouraged from consulting the *Players Handbook* or the *DMG*. The base price, which is the amount the auctioneer starts with, is on a tag attached to each item. No preauction sales will be made, as this would be unfair to other bidders. Once the PCs have inspected everything (and there is much more than the items listed above), the tower bell strikes 10 o'clock and Mr. Twillyfoot raps his gavel to start the bidding. PCs may bid as they wish; NPC bids are determined by rolling percentile dice.

1d100	Result
01-50	The bid is raised.
51-90	No bid is made.
91-00	The bid is raised, or there is a last-minute bid.

For example: The DM makes an NPC roll of 45, raising a PC's bid. A PC makes a bid, raising the price. The DM rolls again and gets a 72, meaning the PC's bid goes unchallenged. Acting as the auctioneer, the DM calls out "Going once . . . going twice. . ." and makes one final roll, a 25, which he ignores (since it has followed a "no bid" roll) and calls out, "Sold to the barbarian in the furry hat!" (or whatever the PC looks like). If on that final toss the DM rolled a number between 91 and 00, some NPC would have had second thoughts and decided to up the bid at the last second. The bidding continues normally until another 51-90 is rolled. Only one last-minute NPC bid is allowed per item, but PCs may make as many as they wish. The object is not to show how rich the NPCs are, but to lighten the PCs' pockets. If 91-00 is rolled during the normal course of bidding, it is treated the same as an NPC raise.

PCs may bid against each other, but care should be taken that no hard feelings are generated. Auction etiquette should be strictly observed. No one is allowed to artificially bid up the price on something he doesn't really want, or to annoy other serious bidders. Anyone doing so will be spotted as a potential troublemaker and be asked to leave the auction.

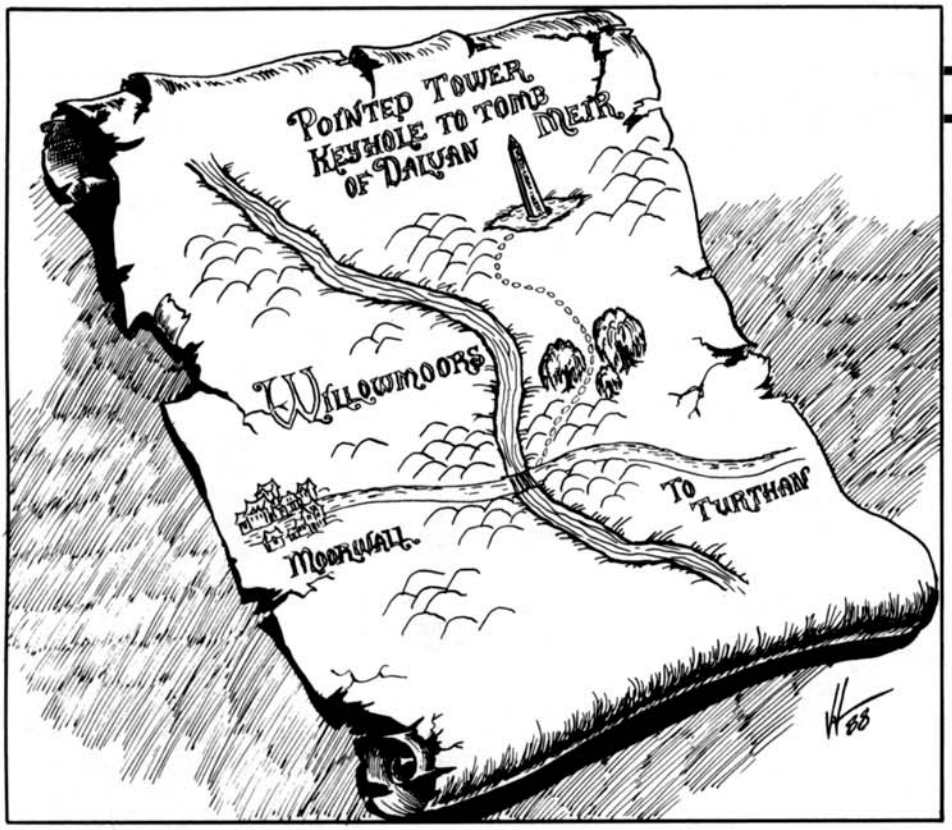
For NPC bids, the amount a bid goes up is determined by the item's base price. An item tagged at 500 gp may be bid upon in 10-gp increments. Round numbers are easier to keep track of, so bids of 5, 10, 20, 25, 50, 75, and 100 are recommended.

The action of this scenario should be fast; PCs with too much time to think might not make that all-important impulse buy. Players must also understand that their PCs are purchasing items and *not* experience points. The DM must make it entirely clear before beginning that experience points are to be earned, not bought. Outbidding a higher-level NPC does not constitute defeating that NPC, and no experience points are to be awarded on such shaky grounds.

Concluding the Adventure

Various adventures can spring from this auction. If the map on the L'Angelo painting is accurate, the PCs can follow it, perhaps finding out what really happened to the first Lord Crompton. Obscure runes on the antique lacquered vase may lead to another adventure.

There is also the possibility the PCs could discover a plot to steal all the auction gold on its way to the bank. If they are of an alignment that would steal from the poor and from helpless orphans, they could try stealing the gold themselves. On the other hand, they might want to think twice over such an action, as Demetrius would happily put off his retirement long enough to help track down such thieves. Ω



THE MOOR-TOMB MAP

BY JON BAILEY

In this dungeon, adventurers are the treasure.

Artwork by Valerie Valusek

Jon Bailey attended Middlebury College and Indiana University, studying history and Japanese literature. He has been playing DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games for 5½ years, mostly as a family affair with his brother, uncle, father, and close friends. This is Jon's first purely creative published work, and his first module in DUNGEON® Adventures.

"The Moor-Tomb Map" is an AD&D® game adventure designed for a balanced party of 4-6 characters of 2nd-4th level. This adventure can be used by a DM who wishes to give his PCs a mysterious treasure map. Rather than simply handing the players a hastily sketched map that leads to some unguarded (and undetermined) treasure, the DM can use this module to provide a dangerous and intriguing quest. The map on this page can be photocopied or drawn out for the players. The DM's area map is sufficiently vague to lend itself to any campaign, but both treasure map and DM's map can be modified to suit the DM's own campaign world.

The players' map should be found by the PCs during some quest prior to the start of this adventure. If possible, rumors and legends of Dalvan Meir should be planted in the campaign prior to the discovery of the map, or else the PCs should be able to learn a bit more about Dalvan Meir from sages or libraries. Dalvan is said to have been of less than Arch-Mage status but powerful nonetheless, and was rumored to have been obsessed with immortality (all true enough). The location of his tomb and treasures is a perennial topic of interest among sages, though adventurers have largely lost interest in finding it.

For the Adventurers

You have traveled far to reach the sleepy little hamlet of Moorwall that lies before you. The only populated area indicated on your tattered old map, Moorwall offers a place to rest and gather the supplies you will need for your journey into the reportedly dangerous wilderness known as the Willowmoors. You come seeking the famous lost tomb of the mage Dalvan Meir, but your quest is not a simple one — the tomb itself does not appear on your well-worn parchment. Perhaps the marks indicating its location were worn away, or maybe they were not meant to be open-

ly displayed. Some of the local folk might provide you with information to help interpret your cryptic map.

For The Dungeon Master

Long ago, a powerful mage named Dalvan Meir lived in an isolated stronghold in the Willowmoors. He had enjoyed an extremely long life (some thought him immortal or half-elven) through frequently imbibing potions of *longevity.* After drinking 11 such potions (thereby adding 70 years to his already considerable life span), he refused to imbibe another. He calculated that if he limited himself to this number, he would still have a slightly better than 50% overall chance to avoid experiencing the reversal of their effects.

Dalvan then sought a safer means of insuring his continued existence. After completing lengthy research that left him bedridden with old age, Dalvan found a solution by successfully creating a previously unknown spell, a more powerful and longer-lasting version of the one now commonly referred to as the *magic jar* spell. Unfortunately (for Dalvan, that is), he could not think of any nearby individuals who were capable or worthy enough to have their bodies taken over by him. Since he was not healthy enough to travel, the mage developed a scheme to draw likely prospects to him.

Known for his wealth and power, Dalvan assumed that after his death gifted adventurers would come from many faraway lands to search for his hidden treasure hoard. He set intellectual and physical barriers in the way of these would-be grave-robbers so that only the most gifted would be able to reach his burial chamber. Here the wizard's bodily remains and some of his wealth were to be placed, along with a magical crystal housing Dalvan's spirit. With the aid of a specially crafted magical item (*Dalvan's circlet;* see end of module), Dalvan felt confident that he could easily gain possession of some young and strong adventurer's body.

Over 200 years have passed since Dalvan Meir went to his final rest. Until recently, no one had succeeded in finding the hidden tomb, let alone the supposed treasure hoard, and the tomb has faded into local memory as a dubious legend. The only guide to the tomb's location, an obelisk in the swamp, has itself been all but lost. Thought to be a menhir of an old druidic shrine, it was sometimes sought (but rarely found) by occasional passing pilgrims.

Ten months ago, a group of five adventurers were traveling along the Old Moor Road when they were spotted by a large band of lizard men near the Melarin River bridge. The lizard men gave chase, and the group fled north into the wildness of the moors. Feverishly racing through the tangled and swampy undergrowth, two of their number were trapped and drowned in hidden mires. One of the other three was overtaken and devoured just as the final two reached the obelisk.

Desperate, the adventurers tried to climb the towering structure and were surprised to see how easily it lent itself to such a use. Scrambling upward as their fallen comrade was being eaten, they were able to reach the top before their unsated pursuers spotted them. The lizard men, too fearful to make such an apparently dangerous climb and apprehensive of the nature of this mysterious structure, half-heartedly lofted a few spears at their too-high targets and settled for more meager fare than they had anticipated.

As the two high-perched adventurers waited for the lizard men to withdraw, they observed their surroundings. The view from this height was quite stunning, but what really caught their attention were the cryptic riddles written on the top of the obelisk and the intriguing vista seen through the inset telescopic lens there. The two survivors put their losses behind them, hoping to make the most of their misfortune by investigating their curious discovery.

After descending the obelisk, the pair soon located the lake they had seen through the structure's lens. Exhausted, they crossed to the island in the middle of the lake on a floating log. Once ashore, they didn't bother to investigate the two ominous-looking copper portals set into the hill, but entered a natural cave on the north side of the island and settled in to recuperate.

Even though the adventurers guessed that great treasures could be found beyond the copper doors, they were wary of making any rash moves without assistance. They decided, therefore, to enlist the aid of comrades living in the south. They drew up a map (the same one that the PCs now possess) and took it to Moorwall in order to find someone there who could carry it to their friends. They succeeded in hiring a courier, but unbeknownst to these unfortunate fellows, he was killed enroute and the map was lost. How it came to be found by the PCs is a problem the DM should resolve as best fits his campaign.

Before returning to the island, the two adventurers decided that a celebration was in order, so they stopped at the local inn (the Much Moor Ale Inn, described further into this adventure) and began quaffing down flagons of ale. They were a bit too liberal that night with their drunken tale-telling, and their story was overheard by members of a bandit ring. When they returned the next day to the tomb, the adventurers were tailed by these evil men. As the two waited on the island for their comrades, the bandits gathered their fellows and returned.

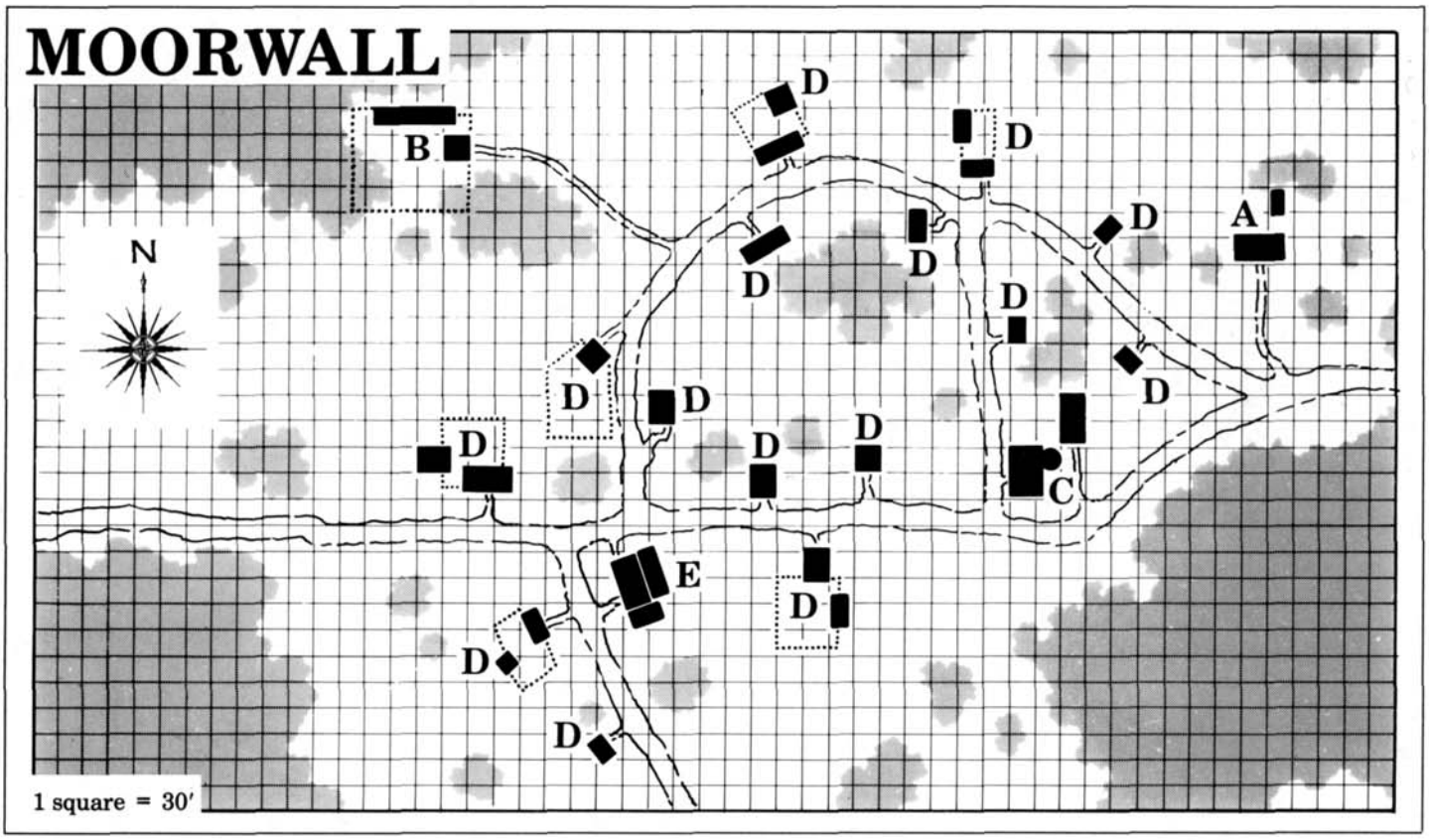
After surprising and brutally murdering the unsuspecting adventurers, the group of bandits, led by a notorious chief called Dougal, decided to use the island as their permanent hideout. The wicked band has prospered ever since. Unless they are slain by the PCs, the bandits will continue to harass and beleaguer the surrounding lands for a long time to come.

None of the above information should be discovered by the PCs until late in the adventure, if at all, for knowledge of the bandits' involvement might disrupt the intended course of the play. The PCs must be fully convinced that they have come to Moorwall to be involved only in a simple treasure hunt. It is possible that suspicious PCs might try to force information from the bandits' agents (such as the village innkeeper or his guests, the hunters), but these men are able to confirm only that the evil band exists. They have no knowledge of where the secret hideout or the legendary tomb are located, since the bandits do not trust their agents so far as to tell them everything.

Moorwall

The small hamlet of Moorwall is a simple farming community with less than 200 residents. It sprang up around an inn that was built here to provide shelter for travelers as they exited from or prepared to enter the Willowmoors.

The village rests midway between two provincial capitals, and though it is nominally ruled by the Count of Turthan, its citizens do pretty much as they please. The village's highest local



authority is a rather indolent guard captain. In most circumstances, local people will not wear armor or carry weapons unless engaged in work requiring them; the DM should apply common sense to encounters when deciding what items NPCs are wearing or carrying with them.

A. Trapper's Lodge. Hal Pensson owns this small cottage and the storage shed behind it. Hal, a good-natured but quiet fellow, can be seen every morning wandering around the fringe of the moors, placing and examining his steel traps. He does not set these anywhere near the Old Moor Road, but anyone who wanders off the road may very well walk right into one of these large and damaging devices (see the Random Encounter Tables).

Hal avoids talking to strangers unless they are in the market to purchase his beaver pelts or lizard skins. At any given time he has 2-12 pelts (25% chance that 1-4 are actually from giant beavers) and 2-8 skins (from giant lizards and lizard men). He sells normal-size beaver pelts for 3-18 gp, giant-size beaver pelts for 300-1,800 gp, giant lizard skins for 6-60 gp, and lizard-man skins for 10-100 gp.

Hal Pensson: AC 6; MV 12″; F3; hp 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, I 13, W 9, D 16, C 15, Ch 8, Co 10; AL CN; leather armor, footman's flail, staff. Although Hal is a capable combatant, he is not anxious to do any adventuring for he feels that he is making a good living selling his furs. He knows the swamp well enough to be a party's guide, but he is not easily convinced to help. No less than 500 gp are necessary to entice him into accompanying a party on a trek into the moors unless there is a ranger among the group of would-be employers. In this case, he settles for only 100 gp instead (for the opportunity to learn how to track more accurately). He expects half his pay in advance and half upon completion of the job.

Hal's only possessions are the furs mentioned above and 2-8 bear-size traps that he keeps in the shed behind his house. The wooden shed is quite sturdy, and its tough oaken door is secured by a large padlock that contains a poisoned needle trap (save at −4 or fall into a coma for a week). Hidden beneath the floorboards of his house, Hal keeps a large money bag that contains 25 pp, 124 gp, and 57 ep. Hal will kill to protect his property. He wears his armor now out of long-practiced habit.

Hal's only living relative is his brother, Tiesen, who lives in Turthan. Before leaving on any extended excursion into the moors, Hal gives over all his valuables (including any advance payment from the PCs) into the hands of his only true friend, Captain Damber of the provincial guard (see area C). In the event of Hal's death, Damber is charged with transporting the goods to Tiesen.

B. Houndsman's House and Kennel. This is the home of Cobal Pinkrin, who lives here with 12 war dogs that he raises to produce puppies for sale to passing merchant caravans. Cobal is probably the most dour and ill-natured man in the village. He is universally disliked in Moorwall. Only the hunters Harvey and Wynne (see inn room E11) can stand to be in his company for any length of time, and that is because they drink up all of his liquor in order to put themselves and him in an agreeable state of mind. The three of them can often be found drinking and

gambling from sundown to dawn. Before getting intoxicated or sleeping, Cobal always takes the precaution of letting all his dogs into the house to guard him and his buddies.

On nights when the hunters do not come calling, Cobal usually practices knife throwing against the front door. At such times he keeps only his two toughest dogs in the house, for he is quite capable of protecting himself from most threats.

In the detachable pommel of Cobal's sword is hidden a gold ring set with an amethyst (750 gp value). Cobal purchased it 25 years ago as an engagement present for his fiance, but she sickened and died of plague before they could be married. When drunk, he often fingers the pommel and bitterly dreams of what might have been. In his belt pouch he carries the only coins he possesses, 9 gp and 17 sp. Cobal wears his armor constantly as protection from dog bites and imagined attackers.

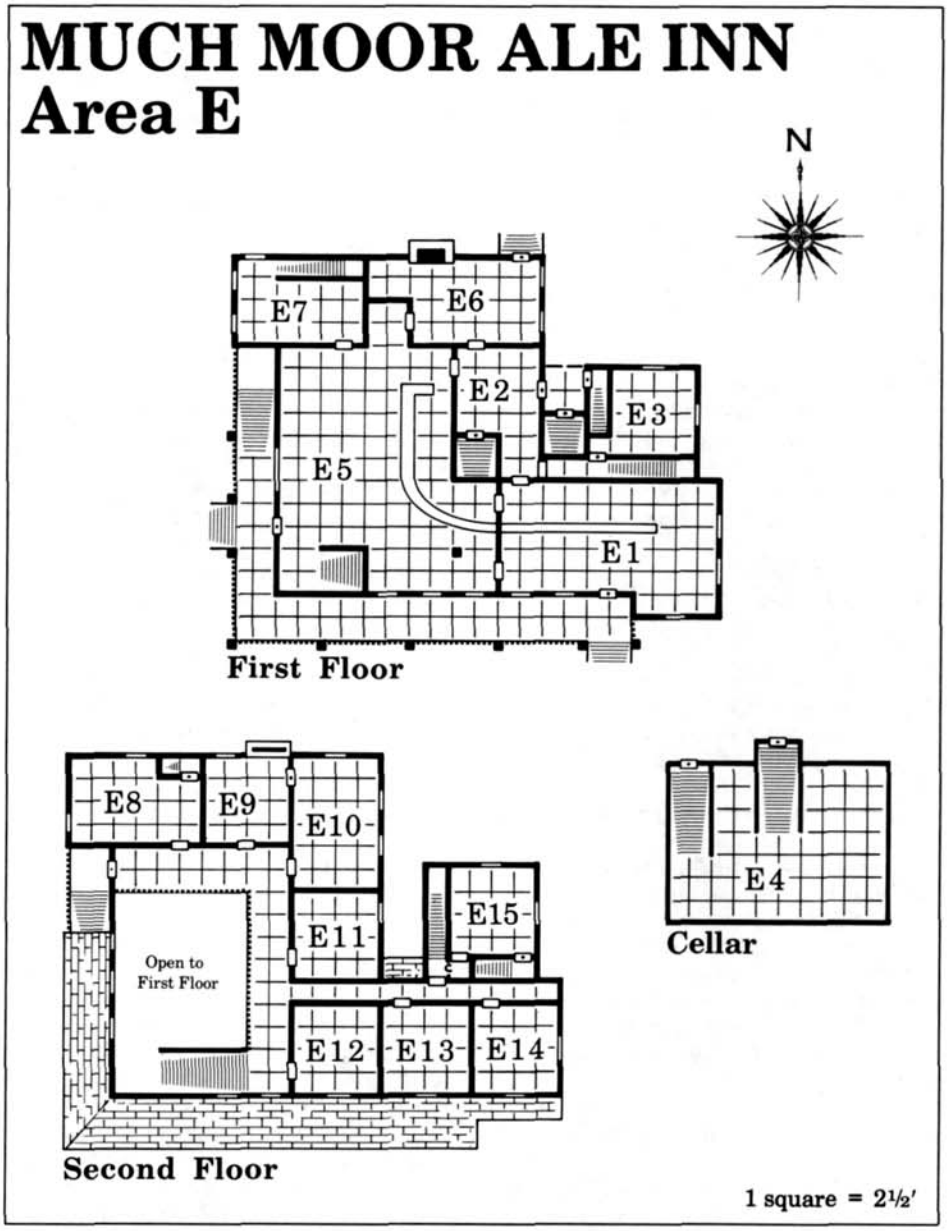
Cobal Pinkrin: AC 5; MV 9"; F3; hp 19; #AT 1, or 3 at +2 to hit with throwing daggers; Dmg by weapon type, +2 with throwing daggers; SA weapon specialization with throwing dagger; S 14, I 9, W 8, D 16, C 13, Ch 6, Co 5; AL CE; studded leather armor, short sword, six throwing knives in belt.

War dogs (12): AC 6; MV 12"; HD 2+2; hp 17, 16, 15, 14 (×2), 13, 12 (×3), 11 (×2), 10; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; AL N.

C. Guard House. This large stone structure is garrisoned by the soldiers of the Count of Turthan. The unit is commanded by Captain Damber, an able fighter but not much of a leader — nor does he care to be. Damber is the son of a wealthy merchant of Turthan, and his commission was purchased for him.

Damber has heard rumors about banditry in the area, but he chooses to ignore the matter until provided with solid evidence. If the PCs give him proof by utterly destroying the bandit ring, he presents them to the Count of Turthan, claiming partial credit for himself. If, however, the PCs simply provide evidence that they have encountered the bandits, Damber takes things in hand by summarily deputizing them all and ordering them to return and finish the job!

The captain is assisted by 12 hearty but ill-disciplined soldiers, who can be found drinking in the inn not only during their off-hours but also while they are on duty. They have been stationed in this village for a long time and have not only grown very experienced (as a result of long-ago battles against local lizard men) but lately quite arrogant and lazy. They boast that their fighting skills allow them the luxury of foregoing the maintenance of a vigilant watch.



Captain Damber: AC 4; MV 9"; F5; hp 48; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, I 11, W 10, D 13, C 17, Ch 12, Co 10; AL N; chain mail, shield, *long sword +2*, potion of *polymorphing*.

Soldiers (12): AC 4; MV 9"; F2; hp 15 each; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL variable; chain mail, shield, long sword, long bow, 12 arrows.

D. Farmhouses. Each of these small dwellings belongs to a farm family with 2-9 members. Many of the farmers have secondary training in some trade such as weaving, carpentry, masonry, or the like, but there is not enough business in Moorwall to warrant specialization in such work. The farmers are all zero-level humans, barely capable of protecting themselves. They have little property worth stealing.

Farmers and family members: AC 10; MV 12″; zero-level humans; hp 1-6 each; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL variable; the weapons owned include pitchforks (as military forks with −1 to hit and damage), daggers, clubs, knives, hand axes, chopping blades (as short swords), whips, and slings (used for killing small game). No armor or shields are owned.

E. Much Moor Ale Inn. This inn, the only one in Moorwall, is run by a sinister, scheming fellow. It is quite a successful business, for it is situated along a major trade route one day's walk from the next closest stopping place. This two-story building, the entertainment center of Moorwall, is the sole place where one can find lodging. More importantly, it contains the only bar in the village. Not only do the inn's guests patronize the bar each evening, but 2-12 villagers and as many guardsmen show up as well.

The inn also attracts traveling merchants and wayfarers, so the make-up of the clientele varies considerably from night to night. In addition to villagers and guards, there can be:

2-8 merchants with 3-18 pack handlers and drovers (25% chance)

1-4 noblemen with 1-4 servants and 208 guards each (10% chance)

2-12 wandering rogues (75% chance)

2-12 tradesmen (60% chance)

3-18 guard patrolmen (50% chance)

2-8 adventurers (25% chance)

Statistics for these characters should be invented by the DM as required. The inn itself is staffed by an eccentric collection of people, from Solemn the innkeeper to the four multitalented serving girls.

Solemn, the innkeeper: AC 7 (5 with armor); MV 12″; F1/T4; hp 28; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, I 14, W 12, D 16, C 18, Ch 8, Co 10; AL CN; *leather armor +1, ring of protection +1.* Solemn is an ambitious man, a former mercenary and thief who turned to an easier life. Now 45 years old, he wants to be very rich before he retires. He therefore always behaves in a sycophantic manner toward wealthy or noble guests, hoping to gain some favor thereby. He never fails to overplay the part, however, generally encouraging his guests to revile him.

Discouraged because of his frustrated ambitions, Solemn was recently moved to join the local bandit troupe (after recognizing one of his guests as a member of the gang) in order to gain by force what the rich would not give him willingly. As soon as a small merchant, noble, or adventuring band (like the PC party) arrives at the inn, he warns the travelers of the great danger of wandering blindly through the vast moor. He then subtly encourages them to hire guides such as Harvey and Wynne (his cohorts who reside in room E11 upstairs).

When the inn is open for business, Solemn can be found in rooms E3 or E5. When it is closed, he is in room E15.

Malachi, the steward: AC 10; MV 12″; zero-level human; hp 4; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL LN. A shrewd manager, Malachi oversees most of the workings of the inn, for his boss is not disciplined or patient enough to handle all the details involved in running such an involved business. While Solemn hosts (and insidiously schemes), Malachi does all the real work of management. Malachi is too involved with his own great workload to take any notice of the unsavory doings of his master.

When the inn is open, Malachi is in either room E1 or E5; when closed, in room E4 or E14.

Alonso, the cook: AC 8; MV 12″; A4; hp 22; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, I 13, W 10, D 16, C 15, Ch 13, Co 14; AL NE; *dagger of venom,* potion of *poison,* 12 *throwing darts +2.* Previously an adventuring partner of the innkeeper, Alonso accepted a temporary position as one of Solemn's hirelings after he fell deeply into debt. During his study of and experimentation with ingested poisons, he also learned a great deal about the culinary arts, so he became the inn's chief cook. Although he has gained a deserved reputation for being an expert chef, Alonso has lately become increasingly dissatisfied with the unchallenging kitchen work. Realizing this, Solemn intends to speak with Dougal, the bandit leader, to convince him to enlist the assassin's services.

When the inn is open, Alonso is in room E6. After hours, he is in room E4 or E14.

Laric, the bartender: AC 6 (1 with armor); MV 12″; F5; hp 31; #AT 1, or 3/2 with +3 to hit with club; Dmg by weapon type, +3 with club; SA double specialization with club; knock victims unconscious with sap; S 18/38, I 12, W 14, D 18, C 13, Ch 16, Co 15; AL LN; *chain mail +1,* iron-shod club, sap. This man is probably the most likeable fellow in town. He entertains customers for hours with his amazing bartending skill. Travelers love to watch him as he spins bottles, catches mugs behind his back, or transports a huge number of flagons in his moderately sized hands. He is well paid and well tipped. Although he has had quite a bit of fighting experience (gained in countless barroom brawls and combat with marauding lizard men), he has no interest in leaving this lucrative occupation. Ignorant of Solemn's private dealings, he remains quite loyal to the man, for the innkeeper has promised that he'll help Laric to open his own place after a few years. Laric requests that visitors respectfully remove their headwear upon entering the inn. Then, if a disturbance arises, he feels he can easily quell it with a few well-placed blows of his sap (50% chance that a successful hit strikes a victim's head as per page 28, *Dungeon Masters Guide,* causing automatic unconsciousness).

If the inn is open, Laric can be found in room E5. When the bar closes, he goes to room E4 or E14.

Chaflee, the shopkeeper: AC 10; MV 12″; zero level; hp 4; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL NG; dagger under clothing. Chaflee is 63 years old, plump and balding. Always cheerful with customers, he enjoys bartering, but Solemn does not allow him to lower his rates by more than 20%.

Chaflee is in room E1 while the inn is open for business; after hours, he can be found in room E4 or E14.

Lita, Mari, Alena, and Clair (serving girls): AC 10; MV 12″; zero level; hp 3 each; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL N; unarmed but can get knives in an emergency. These four women trade off working as cooks, barmaids, and chambermaids. They are the teenage daughters of local farming families.

The four work in room E5 or E6 when the inn is open, and retire to room E1 or E15 after it closes.

Much Moor Ale Inn Key

The inn has a front porch with roof, at one end of which is a staircase leading to the second floor. A single chimney leads up from the kitchen, and only two entrances are available to customers. One other door is open only to inn employees as it leads to the kitchen,

and an open courtyard enclosed by gates is placed in the back of the inn. All of the doors to the inn and the courtyard gates can be locked and barred from the inside. Doors are typically locked late in the evening before the inn employees turn in for the night, and they are reopened at dawn. Only Solemn and Malachi have the keys to the locks in this place. The 8′-high rear gate opens only when there is a delivery. All windows are shuttered and have no glass; the shutters themselves may be latched shut, but may be knocked open with ease (make an *open doors* roll with a +1 on the die per attempt).

The floor-to-floor distance in the inn is 10′, with floor spaces being 1′ thick. Walls are 3″ to 6″ thick and made of wood and plaster. Floors are entirely of wood. A small, one-person outhouse is maintained 60′ from the building. The entire first floor and porch have a 2½′ crawlspace under them, so the cellar floor level is actually 7½′ below ground. The roof is made of lumber with thin sheets of slate.

E1. General Store. This part of the building is a supply store. Many items of use to merchants and travelers can be purchased here at a rate 40-60% higher than the prices listed in the *Players Handbook*. Following are the percentage chances that items under the various headings are in stock: armor 5%, arms 20%, clothing 60%, herbs 5%, miscellaneous equipment and items 80%, provisions 100% (food only), religious items 5%, tack and harness 60%. No livestock, drinks, or horse barding can be found here.

E2. Storeroom. This room is used for storing items useful to the running of both the inn and the store. Hanging from the west wall are mops, brooms, dustpans, and various tools. Shelves along the east wall hold an assortment of cleaning solutions, towels, and linen. In the northeast corner is a spare table surrounded by extra chairs that often seat members of the staff when off-duty or on break.

Unlocked doors to the north, east, south, and west lead to the kitchen, office, store, and barroom respectively. The locked door to the south leads to a stairway descending to the cellar. The eastern locked door leads outside to a delivery area that is blocked off by an 8′-tall wooden gate that also has a lock.

E3. Office. This small, 10′ × 10′ room is Solemn's private office. A large desk along the east wall dominates the room. Its locked drawers hold various employment, sales, and purchasing records. A large metal chest that is bolted to the floor in the northeast corner serves as a strongbox. It holds the weekly revenues, which are used mainly for the purchase of wholesale goods and for the payroll. On any given day, the chest holds 20-120 gp worth of assorted coins. The entrance to this room is always locked, even when Solemn is within.

E4. Cellar. There are two entrances to this room, from the storeroom and the delivery area (see area E2), both of which are always kept locked except when taking deliveries and when necessary to restock the store or bar.

Several racks and crates stacked about the room contain food and other inventory items. Extra cots, tables, and chairs are strewn about randomly. A number of barrels are stacked on racks along the south wall; four of them contain green-colored ale, three contain beer, two contain cheap wine, one contains mead, one rum, and one a watered-down brandy. Shelves lining the east wall usually hold 30-40 bottled wines and 2-8 bottles of fine brandy (worth 20-200 sp each).

E5. Barroom. Barmaids wait on the 10 tables during mealtimes (11:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M. and 5:00 P.M.-9:00 P.M.), and the barkeep handles the whole room at other times. Prices run about 50% higher than the norm, but the house specialty, "Moor Ale" (actually just a normal brew with green coloring added), runs for 1 gp per quart flagon. Stairs lead up to a 5′-wide gallery from which the second floor rooms can be reached.

All valuables (such as unsold alcohol) are locked up each night in room E2. All of the rooms above have easy access to the barroom. Oftentimes this area serves as a common sleeping chamber for those too poor (or too late) to secure one of the private rooms upstairs.

E6. Kitchen. During mealtimes, one or two of the female servants assist Alonso with the cooking. They try to dissuade customers from entering this area unbidden. If necessary, Solemn or Laric will be called to deal with any hostile intruders. This area contains only those things common to the workings of a large kitchen (pots, pans, knives, foodstuffs, seasonings, etc.), and there is little to retain an adventurer's interest. The outer door is kept locked and barred after dark.

E7. Private Dining Room. This well-decorated room rents for 1 ep per hour or 5 gp per day. It contains a finely crafted table and set of chairs for quiet dining and a pair of comfortable chairs and a divan for relaxation. Stairs lead to a door (normally locked and barred) that provides access to the inn's finest bedroom above. If some wealthy patron rents the room upstairs, he can pay extra to use this room as well, creating a luxurious suite (at a combined rate of 8 gp per day).

E8. Luxurious Private Room. This well-appointed bedroom is rented to any who are willing to pay the rather expensive fee (5 gp per night). Solemn's policy is to try and rent it to anyone at all as early in the day as possible, but even if he does rent it to someone, he'll not always abide by the agreement. If some more influential or noble customer arrives after the room has already been let, Solemn doesn't hesitate to demand that lowlier guests defer to their betters by evacuating the room.

The room contains a large dresser with a mirror and a large feather bed (comfortable cots can also be furnished upon request). There are cushioned chairs and a love seat in the eastern part of the room. Attractive paintings line the walls.

E9. Private Room. Two single beds nearly fill this cozy room, which rents for 5 gp per night. Other furnishings include a table and two small footlockers provided with individual keys. In addition to the main entrance, there is a second door that leads to room E10. Only Solemn has the key to this door, and he'll unlock it at the request of a party wishing to rent both rooms. The door can be barred from this side.

Of all the rooms in the inn, this is the only heated one (as it sits next to the chimney from the kitchen). This results in the room's higher-than-usual price.

E10. Private Room. This 3-gp room is rather cramped, for it contains little more than sleeping space. There are three sets of bunk beds and a small

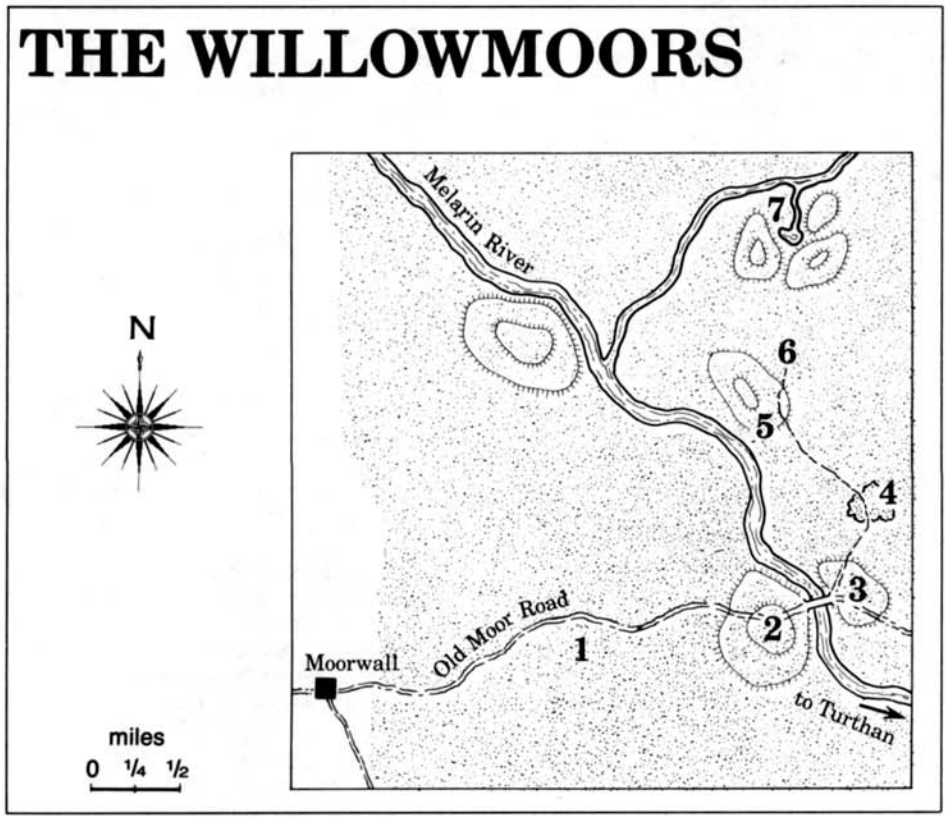


table surrounded by three chairs. An iron bar is provided for use in securing the door to room E9.

E11. Private Room. There are two single beds and a small table with two chairs in this 2-gp room. It is currently home (for free) to Harvey and Wynne, two men posing as hunters and wilderness guides who are actually members of the bandit force. It is their job to guide unsuspecting (and wealthy) employers to the bridge on the moors, where they are ambushed by the rest of the gang.

These two men always behave in a friendly and jovial manner. They rarely hunt, spending their free time drinking and gambling either in the barroom or at the home of the houndsman, Cobal Pinkrin (building B). The men claim to be down on their luck and therefore agree to hire on for a very reasonable price — 25 gp each — to be paid upon completion of the job. They politely insist, however, that they be allowed to take along two of Cobal's hounds for protection and for their superior tracking ability. As shall be seen later, the dogs (hp 14, 13) are wanted in order to supplement the hunters' combat strength during the ambush they plan for the party (see Willowmoors encounter area 3). These men wear armor only in the wilderness.

Harvey: AC 5; MV 6″; F3; hp 21; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL NE; scale mail, shield, long sword, long bow, 10 arrows, knife.

Wynne: AC 5; MV 6″; F2; hp 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL NE; scale mail, shield, long sword, long bow, 10 arrows, knife.

E12. Private Room. There are two sets of bunk beds in this 2-gp room, along with a large table flanked by two chairs.

E13. Female Servants' Room. This room is set aside for the female servants of the inn, but because their boss is a greedy fellow, the women sometimes have to sleep in the general store (room E1) so as to provide extra space for paying guests (at 2 gp per night). The room contains two bunk beds and four small chests (containing only clothing).

E14. Male Servants' Room. This room is identical to room E13 except that it is for use by the male servants when not rented out to paying guests at 2 gp per night. If necessary, the men sleep in the cellar (room E4).

E15. Master Bedroom. This room is never rented to customers, for it is the proprietor's sleeping chamber. It is moderately well decorated and contains a large feather bed, a dresser, a small writing table, and a closet. Solemn keeps little of value in this room. The door leading to the stairwell is normally kept locked, and it, as well as the windows, are barred when Solemn sleeps.

A concealed door set in the side of the closet provides Solemn with the means to exit the building unnoticed. If the clothes are pushed aside, the door can easily be spotted for a stout iron bar secures it. Solemn uses this portal when necessary to rendezvous with the bandits from the moors.

The Willowmoors

The Willowmoors is a wild land of reptilian creatures and dangerous bogs. Everywhere, great drooping willow trees protrude like grassy mounds from the expanse of tangled undergrowth. A trek across its vastness is rather a tiresome affair, even if one moves along the one well-traveled road.

The Old Moor Road is a rutted and winding path, not really a road at all. It is perhaps less dangerous than the wastelands on either side of it, but to traverse its length from Moorwall to distant Turthan is still quite a brave endeavor. Unless escorted by a hardy band of soldiers, the traveler runs a great risk of encountering some danger along the way.

To stray from the path is quite perilous for those who are unwary (or who try to wander the mysterious moors without the aid of a local guide). The uninitiated often find that their greatest threat is posed not by some fell beast, but rather by the thousands of unseen mires that are scattered throughout the desolate land as nature's trap for the incautious.

For random encounters in this area, see the Random Encounters Tables. Particular set encounters on the Willowmoors map are given below.

1. The Broken Cart.

A short distance down the path you see someone attempting to repair a damaged cart. He is trying to raise the heavy vehicle while at the same time exchanging a makeshift axle for his broken one. The poor fellow seems to be having little success, though, for the cart is too cumbersome. A pair of draft horses are tethered a few feet farther away. They seem agitated, as if distraught by the unexpected delay.

As the teamster spots you, he shouts, "Hey, fellas! Lookit, can you come over here and lend me a couple of strong arms? I'm having trouble gettin' this rickety old cart movin'."

This man is actually a **wolfwere** (AC 3; MV 15"; HD 5+1; hp 23; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 2-12 plus possible weapon; SA singing acts as *slow* spell for 5-8 rounds; SD iron or magical weapon to hit, MR 10%; AL CE). He killed the owner of this cart a short while ago with the assistance of his friends, six **wolves** (AC 7; MV 18"; HD 2+2; hp 14, 13, 11, 10, 9, 7; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; AL N). If the PCs kindly assist him, they are in for an unhappy surprise. As they lift the cart, setting shields and weapons aside, the wolfwere pushes a crate underneath, presumably to act as a brace. Before the PCs can lower the cart, he tips the crate over, releasing the wolves who hide within. As PCs begin rearming themselves, the wolfwere turns into a half-wolf and attacks, singing all the while.

A sack inside the crate holds the unfortunate merchant's wealth: 148 gp, 359 sp, seven gems (200 gp, 150 gp, 100 gp (x2), 50 gp, 10 gp, and 1 gp), a potion of *extra-healing,* and a potion of *vitality.*

2. Vulture's Feast.

After climbing gradually upward for the last three-quarters of a mile, the Old Moor Road finally levels out. Although you are some 200' above the level of the surrounding moors, you are unable to get a clear view of the landscape for trees and tall bushes obscure your sight. Before you, the road slopes down toward a bridge nearly half a mile away. As you begin to walk in the direction of the bridge, you suddenly hear the sound of a scuffle coming from beyond a thicket a few feet to your right.

If the party moves into the thicket to investigate what is taking place, read the following:

A horrible scene lies before you. Almost a dozen huge birds are fighting for space around a mound of slain bodies. Blood seeps into the earth as the ravenous creatures peck and tear at the lifeless forms.

The 10 large birds feeding on the bodies are **giant vultures** (AC 7; MV 3"/24"; HD 2+1; hp 12 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; AL N). The eight dead humans were pilgrims traveling to Turthan. These gentle men were waylaid, robbed, and beaten to death by Dougal's bandit gang, now no longer in the area. Their bodies were spotted by the vultures a few hours ago. Neither the pilgrims nor the vultures have any sort of treasure.

The DM should award 100 xp to any good-aligned PCs who fight off the vultures and give the dead men a decent burial. If in doing so the party does not manage to destroy all the vultures, the PCs find themselves unable to be rid of them. The vile creatures keep a close watch on the party from this point on. If the PCs later find themselves incapacitated, the birds do not hesitate to swoop down and make a meal of them.

3. Ambush at the Bridge.

The road has finally descended to the level of the 8'-wide and 100'-long bridge. This rickety, 3'-high structure spans the shallow Melarin River which passes below on its slow journey to Turthan. Its planks look slimy and wet. Worse, only half a dozen broken supports remain to testify that handrails once secured passage along its length.

If Harvey and Wynne are acting as guides, they soon allow their true natures to be known. Harvey suggests that he and his hound, who are familiar with the unpredictable bridge, should precede the PCs by about 20' to guide them over the tricky spots. Meanwhile, Wynne and his dog stay in the rear "in order to make sure that no monsters sneak up from behind." These men are very insistent on these positions without seeming overly pushy. They have several times taken part in ambushes such as the one planned here, and they realize that they must seem entirely trustworthy and good-intentioned in order that the party does not become suspicious. The DM should play them as convincingly as possible. (See the inn, room E11, for Harvey and Wynne's statistics. The war dogs' stats can be found at Moorwall building B.)

Hidden out of sight just below the surface of the murky water are the hunters' confederates, six **lizard men** (AC 5; MV 6"//12"; HD 2+1; hp 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 8; #AT 1 (spear) or 3 (claw/claw/bite); Dmg by weapon type or 1-2/1-2/1-8; AL N). If the party is set up as planned, these mercenaries lie in wait, three to each side of the bridge, until they hear the barking of Harvey's dog (the signal). At that time, they rush up onto both ends of the bridge to trap and slay the PCs in the center. If, however, Harvey and Wynne have been unable to arrange things perfectly (or are not present), the lizard men wait until most of the PCs have reached the midpoint of the span (they can see dimly through the numerous gaps between the planks) and then move to attack. If the hunters are present, the lizard men are influenced by them and fight in a civilized manner with spears, and only until half their number are dead before fleeing. If Harvey and Wynne are not present, the lizard men have higher expectations for rewards and therefore fight ferociously with their normal claw/claw/bite attacks until they are all dead. The hounds attack only as long as there is at least one hunter still fighting.

The river is merely 3' deep at its center, so an armored human has little chance of drowning (PCs smaller than 3½' tall may not have it so easy, however). The bed of the river is soft clay. When walking or standing in the water, movement and attack rates are cut to half normal (it's difficult to keep one's balance with one's feet encased in clay).

Although the bridge has a decidedly unsafe appearance, PCs actually have no chance of inadvertently slipping off its edge into the water. If the lizard men had not recently wet its normally dry surface to make it seem dangerous, the bridge would actually appear quite safe. It is possible, however, that in the midst of a fray one or more PCs or their oppo-

nents might be knocked into the water. This occurs when a roll to hit is four points higher than normally necessary for a successful hit, and the individual struck then fails to roll below half his dexterity score on 1d20 (a roll of 6 or less is necessary for the lizard men and hunters to save, while an 8 suffices for the dogs). Damage from the blow accrues normally in any case.

The hunters fight until things look really dim, for they have not anticipated failure. If captured, they beg for mercy. Since they don't know where the bandit lair is located, they are unable to betray their allies. They may, however, invent a story that sounds believable.

The road continues far beyond the bridge, but the way to the obelisk lies down a barely discernible overgrown path just a few hundred feet away.

4. Willow Wood.

> The path that you have been following seems to lead into a dense area of willow growth, an uncharacteristically large gathering of huge, sad-looking trees.
>
> As you approach the small grove, you are able to judge the trees to be as large as 50′ tall. Your path becomes a little clearer ahead where the dark shade of the clustered willows shields the sunlight from the ground below, allowing little undergrowth to survive.

If the PCs proceed to the grove, the trail leads them 200 yards to a log cabin secluded in a small glade. The following description should then be read:

> As you push your way through the thick, drooping branches and leaves of yet another dark willow, you find yourselves in a small clearing. Less than 10 yards away you see a weatherworn and apparently abandoned log cabin surrounded by an untamed growth of weeds and thorn bushes.

This house could be a useful haven for the rest and recuperation of a weary and injured party. After three rounds of hacking through weeds and brambles, the open doorway to this place can be reached, and the PCs can see an apparently disused room beyond. The only pieces of furniture within are a bed, a table, one chair, and a wood-burning stove. On the table are a few empty clay jars. A thick layer of dust lies everywhere except near the doorway and the two unshuttered windows, where rainfall has kept the floor clean. Although the house seems somewhat strange and ominous, it holds no dangers for the adventurers (but the DM should certainly allow the party to believe otherwise).

5. Mantraps.

> As you climb your way up a gently sloping hill, you notice that the generally dank, stifling air of the moors has begun to smell fresh and fragrant as though you are approaching a pleasant spring glade. The sweet scent becomes stronger further up the path to the top of the great mound.

Any PC who continues on up the slope quickly learns the source of the odor, though the DM may decide to tell the player in secret what his character sees (to pique everyone else's curiosity).

> As you reach the peak, you see a moss-covered clearing where you discover two large, leafy plants each spread over a 15′-diameter area on either side of the trail. Gentle wafts of yellowish spores drift delicately in the calm air. The intoxicating pollen aroma calms your senses, and you are stricken with the notion that this lovely glade would be an ideal place for a peaceful repose from the rigors of your perilous adventure.

As the PCs come upon the plants, actually two deadly **mantraps** (AC 6; MV nil; HD 6; hp 25 each; #AT 4; Dmg special; SA hp damage per round (minimum 1 hp) equals victim's AC (no dexterity bonus); AL N), they notice the pleasing aromatic effect described. Some are so affected by the pollen in the air (if they fail their saving throws vs. poison at a +2 bonus due to the stillness of the air) that they move immediately to lie down upon the comfortable leaves. Those who save are merely happy to stand and admire the area for 6-36 turns before leaving with a smile.

Each plant has four "good spots" where PCs may wish to rest (there are four pods per plant). After their victims lie down, the plants enclose them in the manner of a Venus'-flytrap. If there are not enough pods for everyone who has been affected, extra PCs simply recline on the ground alongside the plant until room can be made for them (when a PC in one of the pods is dissolved).

PCs who make their saving throws do not feel an overwhelming urge to lie in the pods, but they find that their intoxicated fellows fight viciously (DM should play them) to keep from being robbed of their "much-deserved relaxation." The only way to save their comrades from destruction is for the free-willed party members to quickly hack the plants up before everyone is digested. The lethargy-inducing effects of the pollen remain with any rescued PCs for 24 hours after they are freed from the deadly plants' clutches.

Hidden on the ground beneath the plants, spit out as indigestible, is the following treasure: 17 pp, 38 gp, 42 ep, 71 sp, 52 ep, two gems (200 gp and 100 gp value), and a *long sword +1, +3 vs. scaly creatures* (i.e. reptiles, fish, and birds, including monstrous forms).

6. Obelisk.

> Before you is a large pool of clear, shallow water 200′ in diameter. In the center of this pond stands a 50′-tall stone obelisk that tapers from a 5′-square base to a 2′-square top. The surface of the monolithic stone (of obviously foreign origin) has been entirely carved with strange letters and symbols.

The players' map calls this pointed tower the "key hole to [the] Tomb of Dalvan Meir." It is, in fact, a device for locating the tomb. The obelisk is surrounded by a pool of water about 3′ deep, which would be relatively safe to cross if not for the two **poisonous snakes** that swim its surface (AC 6; MV 15″; HD 2+1; hp 12 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poisonous bite for 3-12 hp damage (no damage if save vs. poison is made); AL N). These serpents quickly approach and attack the PCs in the second round after the group enters the water. The snakes are aggressive and place themselves between the obelisk and the PCs so that their prey cannot climb away to safety. They attack until slain.

If the PCs defeat the snakes and examine the obelisk at close range, they notice that on each of the tower's four faces there is a vertical strip roughly 1′

wide where the hieroglyphics are cut 4" deep, while along the outer edges (which narrow on either side from 2' wide at the base to only 6" at the top), the symbols are cut merely ½" deep. The purpose of this strange feature will hopefully become obvious to a perceptive group of players, but the DM may have to hint a little. The indentations are designed to act as hand- and footholds for use in scaling the tall structure.

If the PCs attempt a climb, the DM should use the climbing rules in the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide,* pages 14-16, treating the tower as a "nonslippery tree" to determine the rate of ascent and the climbing modifiers. If those guidelines are unavailable, simply use the following procedure. Make one check for each PC who attempts to climb up or down a face of the tower. Determine a thief's chance of success by using his normal *climb walls* percentage; other PCs are allowed a base 60% chance, minus 10% for each point of armor-class rating below 8 (disregarding *all* magical protective effects) and plus 5% per dexterity point over 14.

Because there is a soft clay surface under the water to act as a cushion, falling PCs take only 1d4 hp damage per 10' fallen (noncumulative) and only half that damage if they successfully roll under their dexterity scores.

The apex of the obelisk is a pyramid that has small holes in the center of each face. The east and west holes are merely 1"-deep depressions, but the other two holes actually have an important use. The north and south holes connect through the body of the obelisk. Covered with dirty glass lenses, they operate together as a sort of telescope.

If PCs reach the top of the obelisk and peer through the lens in the south face, read the following:

> When you look into the hole, you notice something strange. There is a little window of glass about 1" from your eye. Looking through it, you see an island in the middle of a previously unseen lake. The small island appears to be directly in front of you, though you know that is impossible! When you look up from the eye hole, you can barely detect a small patch of blue water, half-hidden between the hills about a mile due north of your location.

Obviously, nothing can be found by looking through the holes in the east and west faces. Anyone looking through the hole in the north face sees only a blur. The PCs are not able to remove these lenses in any way (short of high-powered magic) without thoroughly shattering them.

Writing has been chiseled beneath each of the four holes. Unlike the other inscriptions on the obelisk, these lines are written in the common tongue. They seem to be mere moralizations but are actually riddles left here by Dalvan Meir to challenge and test the ability of treasure-seekers to find his final resting place. Each face has a different two-line rhyme:

North face:
"The gold you give repays in kind.
Give well when asked, and safety find."
(This refers to the sacrificial bowl at Island of the Tomb area 1.)

South face:
"Desire for gold may secrets show,
But giving stills the fatal blow."
(This refers to the *masks of Greed* and *Generosity* at Island of the Tomb area 4.)

East face:
"Those crossing deeps to gain the ground,
May fall as biting fear is found."
(This refers to the lake at Willowmoors encounter 7.)

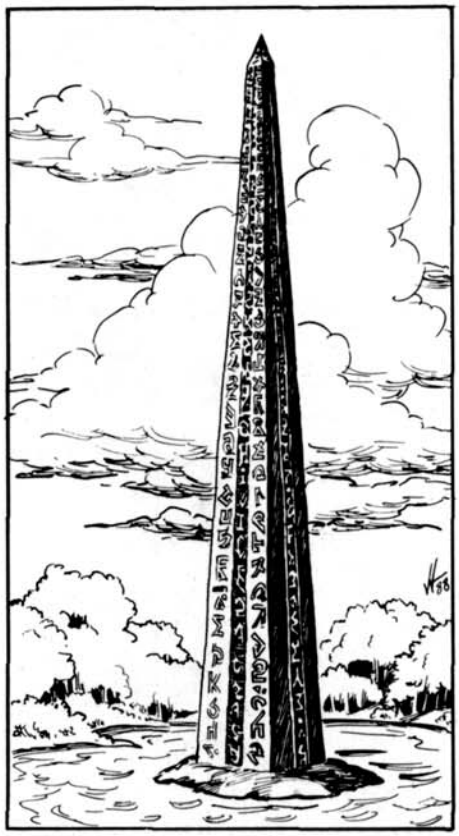
West face:
"One's days can ne'er be forged anew,
But magic may give great their due."
(This refers to Dalvan's plans; see Island of the Tomb area 7.)

7. The Lake.

> After traveling for over a mile and passing between two low hills, you find yourselves within a horseshoe-shaped valley. There is a small lake just beyond; its water looks clear and placid, with scores of little white fish moving slowly between submerged clumps of reeds and weeds. A tree-covered island rests in the center of the lake about 30 yards away.

Crossing this lake can be a very dangerous business. It varies from 2'-20' in depth, and at its narrowest (and most shallow) it is 100' across. PCs wading through the shallows can walk at 75% of their normal movement rates.

These physical characteristics are not

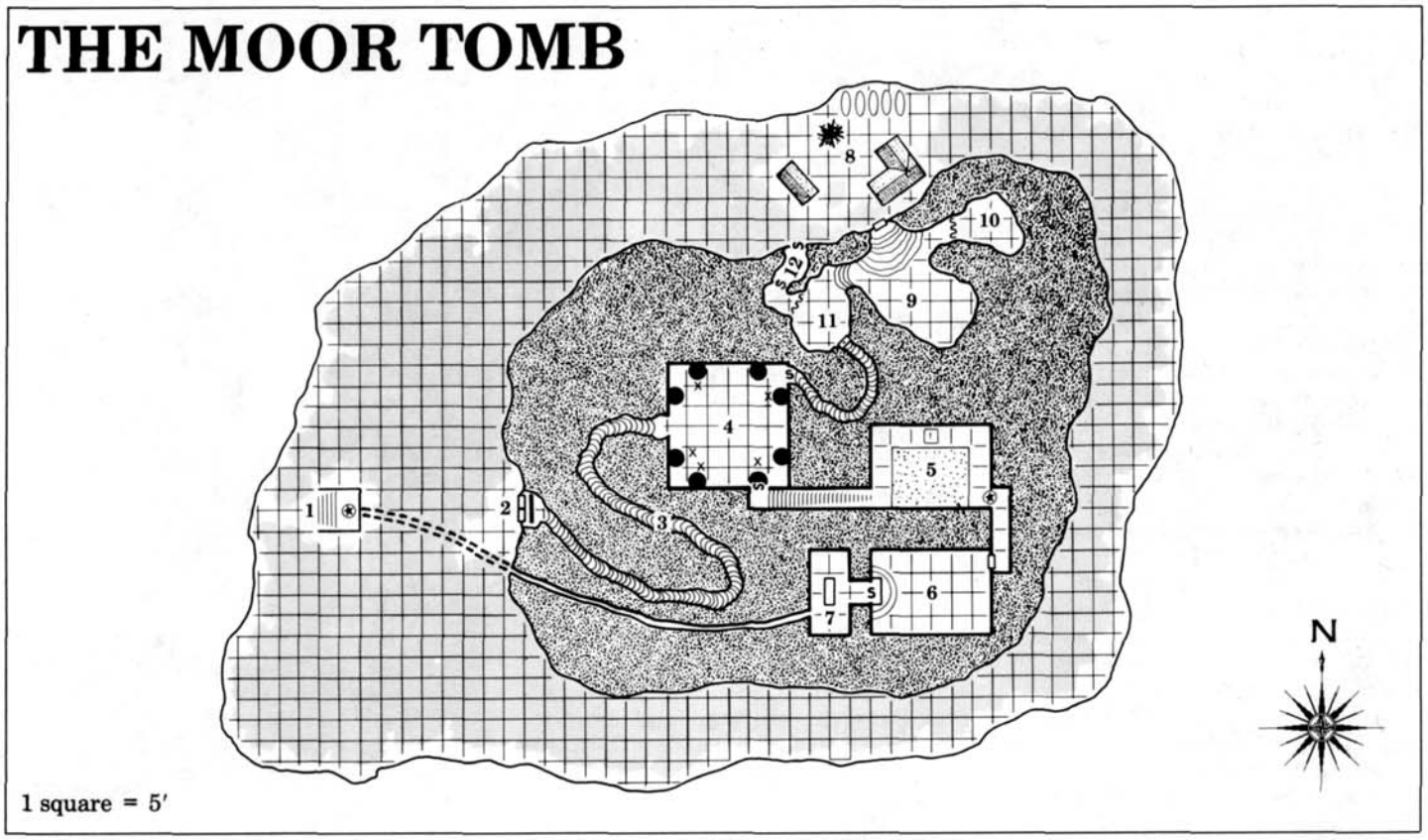


what makes the crossing so perilous, however. This lake happens to be the spawning ground for vicious albino **piranha** (quipper), the white fish mentioned previously (AC 8; MV 9"; HD 1-4 hp; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SA berserk attack as per FIEND FOLIO® tome, page 74; AL N). These fish immediately go into a frenzy and swarm to the attack whenever anyone enters the water. There are 250 of the savage little fish in this particular lake.

The Island of the Tomb

The island is actually not much more than a hill jutting up from the floor of the lake. It harbors almost no living creatures (except the bandits), for rarely have any been able to successfully cross over to it. There are no wandering encounters here; the only creatures that are encountered are those later detailed in areas 1-12.

This island is the base for the marauding bandits. They often travel to and from this island as they go on their despicable missions. The bandits know about the carnivorous fish, but they are undaunted since they travel the lake in canoes. The



piranha actually work to their benefit, helping to guard against surprise encounters with wanderers. If the PC party makes much noise in crossing the lake (e.g., running full speed through the water or screaming in pain), it will be impossible to surprise the bandits (noise carries well in this quiet area).

Set encounters for the island map are given hereafter.

1. Sacrificial Bowl and Statue.

Up a short flight of five large steps stands a stone platform supporting the giant statue of a robed man. His right arm is raised, palm upward, and his left arm is lowered, palm downward. A 5′-diameter stone bowl rests on a short pillar of stone just in front of the mysterious sculpture. Carved into the rock floor below the bowl are the following words:

"Respect this tomb, so firmly sealed.
Most giving gain admittance.
A noble gift will gain fair yield,
A shocking due for pittance."

If the PCs examine the statue and bowl, they see that the latter has a 4″-diameter hole cut into its bottom. Any coins, gems, or jewels deposited within fall down through the hole into the hollow base, then along an angled shaft to drop onto the floor of the treasure room (area 7). As these treasures pass through the bowl, it magically tabulates their worth to give a bonus to a PC's chance of successfully opening the copper vault doors without taking any electrical damage (see area 2).

2. Copper Vault Doors.

After crossing 40′ behind the raised statue, you come upon a small clearing where the hill rises steeply upward. Set into the side of the hill are two copper-colored doors. They seem to be of very stout construction and apparently open inward. The doors' surfaces seem, strangely, to be completely untarnished.

There is a permanent magical trap set upon these copper portals. Any person who touches them may be struck by an electrical shock for 1-8 hp damage per round. This occurrence is 90% likely, minus 1% for each 10 gp worth of treasure that person deposited into the sacrificial bowl at area 1.

Since the doors are particularly heavy, a PC attempting to open them has a chance equal only to his *bend bars* percentage. If several PCs try simultaneously, they can add their percentages together for a single roll, but each one risks electrical damage. A PC is allowed a saving throw vs. spells for half damage, but if he attempts this save he cannot make an effective attempt to open the doors (he jerks his hands away). The PCs may make as many attempts to open the doors as they like, but the chances for shock remain the same.

Anyone who says he is carefully examining the wall immediately behind the doors has a chance to detect the presence of a huge iron door, set to descend from the ceiling and covered with dust to resemble the stonework around its lower edge. This chance may be rolled as a dwarf's or thief's chance to *detect traps.*

3. Descending Corridor.

> This corridor is cut from raw stone. While the vertical difference between its upper and lower ends is only about 50′, the corridor itself is 150′ long.

If any of the PCs trigger the stone pressure-plate trap at the far end of the corridor (25% noncumulative chance per PC crossing the plate), a large iron barrier slides quietly down into place just inside the copper doors, and poisonous gas begins pouring into the Chamber of Masks (area 4) through small holes in the floor. The gas eventually fills up the tunnel as well. On the fifth round after the pressure plate is triggered, there is enough gas in the room and corridor that PCs begin taking damage at the rate of 1 hp per round (no saving throw).

If not magically reopened by someone wearing *Dalvan's circlet* (see end of module), the iron barrier will not retract as long as anything living remains in the tomb (areas 1-7).

4. Chamber of Masks.

> You've entered a 30′-square chamber lined with stone columns at 10′ intervals. On five of these pillars, strange masks are hung. Three more masks lie on the floor as if discarded.

If the PCs examine the columns, they see that all have iron spikes driven into them, but only five of the spikes support masks. If they look carefully at the various masks, the PCs notice that each is different, displaying distinct expressions as though they represent definite emotions. A single word is carved into the forehead of each, noting the expression the mask wears (e.g., "Happiness," "Sadness," etc.).

All of the masks radiate magic, and each has a different effect on any PC who puts one to his face and fails a saving throw vs. spells (even if the mask is later removed).

Three masks lie on the floor:

— *Mask of Happiness:* The wearer experiences uncontrollable laughter for five minutes.

— *Mask of Sadness:* The wearer sobs and weeps for five minutes, after which he experiences a mild headache.

— *Mask of Serenity:* The wearer immediately falls into a comatose slumber that lasts for one week. This effect cannot be negated except by a *remove curse, limited wish, alter reality,* or *wish* spell.

If worn, the first two masks merely cause the wearer to have a −1 on saving throws and attacks made during the time each mask's effect occurs.

Five masks are located on the pillars marked with Xs on the map. Except for the *Mask of Generosity,* each may be placed in the room as the DM desires.

— *Mask of Disturbance:* The wearer experiences a painful churning of his stomach that penalizes him with −2 to hit for 2-8 days.

— *Mask of Courage:* During the next battle in which the PC engages, he flies into an uncontrollable berserk rage, gaining +2 on "to hit" rolls but fighting until either he or the enemy is slain.

— *Mask of Fear:* The next time the PC's party is attacked by numerically superior forces, he attempts to flee in the second round of combat as if the magic-user spell *fear* had been suddenly cast upon him.

— *Mask of Greed:* The wearer's eyes are suddenly able to see the outline of a secret doorway through the easternmost column on the south wall (the one that holds the *Mask of Generosity*). This large pillar actually swings inward (upon the mere touch of the PC wearing the mask) to allow entrance into a hidden passage. No saving throw is required for this mask's effects to work.

— *Mask of Generosity:* This mask negates the effect of the gas that pours into this room (see area 3). It does not, however, lessen the effects of any other sorts of poisonous gases. No saving throw is required for this mask's effects to work. Its effects last for 6 hours; more than one PC may use the mask, each wearing it for one round to gain its benefits before passing it along to another PC.

In the northernmost section of the east wall is a more mundane sort of secret door. It is always kept barred from the opposite side. A *knock* spell or 200 hp of physical damage are necessary to open it. Through a small spy hole cut into this secret door, the bandits observe the room but do not confront the party unless all the PCs are unconscious (in which case the bandits capture and attempt to ransom them), or if the PCs are returning with treasure acquired from the crypt (area 6). The spy hole is covered by a thin piece of glass to protect an onlooker from poison gas effects. The sound of the gas entering the room is audible to anyone on the other side of this spy hole.

5. Acid Pool.

> After exiting through the strange secret door, you see a flight of steps to the left leading down.

If the PCs follow the steps to the room below, read the following:

> At the bottom of the steps, you enter the southwest corner of a 20′ × 30′ room. A 5′-wide walkway runs around the west, north, and east sides of the room, half circling a dark pool of liquid about 6′ below.
>
> In the far wall, just opposite your entrance, is the only apparent exit to the room, but this doorway is almost entirely blocked by a human-size statue of stone.

The liquid in the pool is a mild acid, 4′ deep, that does 1-6 hp damage per round to anyone unfortunate enough to find himself immersed in it. There is a trap midway along the northern walkway; it swings downward as soon as a weight of at least 100 lbs. reaches the very center of its 5′ length. If a PC at this position immediately attempts to jump for safe footing, his percentage chance to succeed (and therefore avoid an acid bath) is equal to three times his dexterity score. If this attempt fails, the unfortunate individual falls into the acid, taking 1-6 hp damage per round until he can extricate himself (individuals under 5′ tall require assistance to climb out of the acid and onto the walkway). If not thoroughly doused with water after escaping the pool, an acid-covered PC continues to suffer 1 hp damage for each of the next 2-8 rounds. PCs who fall into the acid must save for all of their equipment to discover if anything has been destroyed by the acid. This trap immediately resets itself, but everyone in the party can thereafter easily determine its location.

The statue is a **stone guardian** (AC 2; MV 10″; HD 4+4; hp 20; #AT 2; Dmg 2-9/2-9; SD *detect invisibility;* immune to normal missiles, poison, and mind-based spells; one-quarter damage from edged weapons; one-half damage

from cold, fire, and electrical-based spells; AL N). This guardian's normal form of attack is to grab a PC and throw him into the pool of acid. It makes this attack at a −4 penalty to hit. Although only one successful hit is required to make the toss, the guardian does not attack more than one PC per round. Anyone lofted toward the acid must roll less than his dexterity score on 1d20 in order to avoid a poor landing that could cause 1-4 hp damage in addition to that done by the acid (calculate acid damage in the same manner as from the trap detailed previously).

PCs trying to throw the stone guardian into the pool must successfully hit (at a penalty of −4) and then combine their *bend bars* percentages in order to determine their cumulative chance to overpower him. Although the guardian takes 1d6 hp damage from the fall, he takes no damage at all from the acid and can easily climb out of the pool in one round.

If the stone guardian is still active after five rounds and has not been able to throw a single PC into the pool, he resorts to his normal two-punch attack (inflicting 2-9 hp damage with each hit). He attacks until destroyed or until the entire party retreats. The stone guardian does not move out of this room.

6. Crypt of the Ghast.

The doorway to this room is barricaded with two stout iron bars. When the adventurers open the door, the following scene appears:

> As you open the door, you are nearly overwhelmed by the foul stench of putrid flesh. The room, however, seems to contain nothing more than an old, sealed sarcophagus resting against the far wall on a semicircular, 3′-tall stone dais.

This coffin was meant to be the home of a ghoul, a last (if minor) challenge for treasure-seekers, but Dalvan Meir made a rare and fatal mistake. On his deathbed, he hired a mercenary adventurer to find and return with a ghoul guardian but neglected to ask about the sensitivity of his hireling's sense of smell. Unfortunately, the fellow's olfactory receptors had been burned out long ago during an encounter with a giant skunk, and he inadvertently returned with the wrong undead. Instead of a stupid ghoul, he found a much more intelligent ghast.

This ghast did what the mage had not even imagined possible. Enraged by its captivity, it searched the entire chamber for months before it found the secret door leading to the inner treasure chamber (area 7) wherein lay Dalvan Meir's remains.

With an ornamental sword, the ghast chipped away on the mage's sarcophagus until it finally got the lid open. Then, spurred by the rage that stems from hopeless imprisonment, it hopped into the coffin and pounded its contents into splinters, destroying not only the mage's decayed flesh and bones but also the great crystal "soul gem" for the improved *magic jar* spell. The desperate mage attempted to transfer his spirit into the ghast's body, being unaware of the exact nature of the victim he attacked, but only a portion of Dalvan Meir's consciousness survived the transfer into the undead being. The ghast now believes that it is Dalvan Meir, but it has none of the mage's former powers and has only shreds of the mage's memory (and no sanity at all).

The ghast's coffin is empty, but since the lid is closed this is not apparent.

The secret door in the wall behind the sarcophagus is open a barely noticeable crack. As they approach the sarcophagus, PCs have a slight chance to detect the opening (5% for elves and half-elves, 1% for others).

The ghast waits alertly and expectantly behind the secret door, peering through the crack at the PCs beyond. Using a few magical items that once belonged to Dalvan Meir, it is unusually powerful and completely insane.

"Dalvan" the ghast: AC 1; MV 15″; HD 4; hp 31; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-8; SA touch causes paralysis (even for elves); SD immune to *sleep* and *charm* spells, turned as if cleric were seven levels lower (minimum of 1st level) due to combined effect of magical rings and cloak; AL CE; *cloak +1, ring of protection +2, ring of clear thought* (see end of module).

"Dalvan" is extremely bored, quite clever, and unsurpassingly vile — a dangerous combination. The ghast expects that when the party finds the coffin in area 6 to be empty, at least one or two of the PCs will lay down their weapons and shields in order to search the inside of it. If the ghast is correct, or if the PCs turn their backs on it, "Dalvan" abruptly throws open the door (surprising on a roll of 1-4) and pounces on the closest PC. It hopes to paralyze the lot of them, gaining some tasty treats and a bit of cruel satisfaction thereby. The ghast will talk quite freely even during melee, identifying itself as Dalvan Meir and describing all of the horrible spells it will cast at the PCs (it has none). It never makes an attempt to cast a spell, however, at any time.

"Dalvan" fights until destroyed, if necessary, for it prefers to end it all in a thrilling battle rather than continue a monotonous existence here. If the ghast manages to paralyze all the PCs, it laughs hysterically, snatches up one of the party, and retreats through the secret door. It then casually snacks on the captive while waiting for the rest of the party to join it for another fun-filled melee.

7. Inner Treasure Chamber.

> Beyond the secret door you see a smallish room. In its center, lying on a marble table, is another sarcophagus similar to the one in the outer chamber. The lid, which rests on the floor, has been chipped and scarred as if someone or something had spent great effort in prying it loose from its position upon the coffin.
>
> Spread about the floor around the table you see glistening piles of treasure. Most of the riches lie heaped around four large amphorae and three overflowing coffers. Another pile of loot — mostly coins and gems — is scattered on the floor near the west wall under a small hole.

This is the treasure room and crypt of Dalvan Meir. It was intended to be only a temporary place of rest until a desirable adventurer (one capable of making it this far) came close enough for the mage to possess his body. The PCs can soon confirm that Dalvan Meir is no longer a threat, for if they peer into the coffin they see the shattered remains of the mage:

> As you look into the opened sarcophagus, you find that, surprisingly, nothing dangerous lurks within. You see only splintered, cracked, and broken human bones mixed with the worthless shards of what must once have been a very large and valuable crystal with odd runes inscribed upon it.

On the floor around the sarcophagus is the following sizeable cache of treasure: four amphorae containing (separately) five gallons of holy water, wine, oil, and blood (pottery valued at 100 gp each); a gold-trimmed, silver-plated long sword with a diamond in the pommel (badly dented and scratched from use as a prying device by the ghast — worth only 850 gp); a gold ring set with six tiger's eyes (750 gp value); a gold tooth with an inset diamond chip (450 gp); a gold necklace bearing a heart-shaped medallion (200 gp apparent value; this is a *medallion of wound closure,* as per the periapt of the same name); a gold headband (1,000 gp apparent value; this is a special magical item, *Dalvan's circlet,* which is detailed at the end of the module); four silver-colored potions (three are potions of *longevity* and one is a potion of *extra-healing*); a silver-bladed *dagger +1;* 1,200 gp; 120 gems (10 gp base value each); and 20 assorted pieces of jewelry (100-400 gp value each).

Piled under the hole in the west wall is the following conglomeration of treasure: two gems (150 gp and 50 gp value), a broken silver bracelet (85 gp value), 7 pp, 42 gp, 89 ep, 51 sp, 356 cp, and any treasure the party may have dropped into the sacrificial bowl at area 1. The hole in the wall is only 4″ wide. It leads to a slick, sloping tunnel about 120′ long that begins at the bottom of the sacrificial bowl.

8. Fishermen's Huts.

> In a small clearing at the base of the hill you see two crude wooden huts. Between these buildings and the shoreline, two men are warming their hands over the remaining embers of a dying bonfire. At the edge of the water, five canoes lie inverted in a neat row.

The men are posing as friendly fishermen, but in fact they are two of the evil **bandits** (AC 7; F1; hp 10, 7; studded leather armor, long sword (no shield); see area 9 for complete statistics). If asked why they have so many canoes, they reply that they need them to carry their catches downriver to Turthan. If questioned about the tomb, they speak in low tones, saying that they fear there is a curse laid upon it, and anyone who touches the vault doors will die (almost true). They provide no hints about the presence of others on the island, claiming instead that no other humans have been here since their arrival over 10 years ago.

Once the PCs have initiated contact, these two bandits casually follow them wherever they go on the island (except within the tomb) in order to keep an eye on them. Although they pretend to be collecting firewood, watching birds, etc., the men are obvious about their efforts to spy on the party. If confronted, they excuse their actions by saying, "You know, in the wilderness you just can't tell who you can trust, and them that're wary stay amongst the living." They always avoid a fight unless the PCs seem to be snooping around where they might discover the door, concealed behind a thicket of bushes, that leads to the bandits' cave hideout (area 9).

Until the PCs leave the island, all activities by the bandit group are brought to a halt, and those bandits hidden inside the caves remain there (even if their fellows outside are

attacked). They do not want to jeopardize the concealment of their hideout. If the party leaves the island, the bandit group eventually renews its operations but under the cover of darkness.

9. Bandits' Mess Hall.

> After descending 10′ down a natural flight of rock stairs, you find yourselves in a rough chamber about 30′ long and 20′ wide. Lit by a pair of lanterns hung from the side walls, this room appears to be used for dining, for two large tables with flanking benches are cluttered with plates, mugs, and partially eaten food.

If the party has achieved surprise on the occupants of the room, the PCs see six men laughing and eating. Otherwise, the bandits have readied themselves for attack and close with the party at the base of the stairs while yelling words of warning to their comrades in the two adjoining rooms. All of the bandits wear studded leather armor at all times and, depending on the conditions of the encounter, either have shields and long swords resting near at hand or are already holding and preparing to use them.

These bandits are not really an impressive lot, being the least capable of their ilk. They fight only until half of them have fallen before attempting to flee or surrender.

Bandits: AC 6; MV 9″; zero-level humans; hp 6 each; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; AL NE; studded leather armor, shield, long sword, key on leather thong to one footlocker in area 10.

10. Sleeping Chamber.

> After pushing aside the curtain that conceals this area, you see a darkened room with three sets of bunk beds against the walls. On a table in the room's center, a shuttered lantern provides dim illumination.

There are five **bandits** here (AC 10-6; MV 12″ or 9″ (in armor); zero-level humans; hp 6 each; see area 9 for complete statistics). They are either sleeping (if the party has managed to enter quietly) or are donning armor in order to assist their fellows in areas 9 or 11. The DM should determine their degree of preparedness based on the amount of time since the alarm was raised. The bandits use one full round in waking up and getting to their feet. As they put on their armor, they require one round for each point their armor class is lowered (until fully armored at AC 6). The morale of these men is only slightly more stable than those in room 9. They consider surrender or escape only after three of their number are slain.

Under each of the three lower bunks are five small locked chests. The key to each chest is worn around one bandit's neck. Twelve of these wooden boxes contain 2-20 gp, and the other three contain 5-50 gp. There is nothing else of interest or value in this room.

11. Leader's Room.

> In the center of this room is a table and four chairs. Cards, drinks, and coins litter the table. There is a heavy barred door in the southeast

wall of the room, and a thick curtain closes off an opening in the west wall. Against the east wall stand four large kegs and a rack containing over a dozen bottles of wine. Two glowing lanterns are hung on each of the near and far walls.

This is the council and recreation room of the bandit leader, Dougal, and his loyal henchman, Radcliffe. These men are usually found relaxing with four of their underling **bandits** (hp 9 (×2), 6 (×2); see area 9 for complete statistics).

Dougal: AC 1; MV 12"; F5; hp 47; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/24, I 12, W 15, D 15, C 18, Ch 16, Co 15; AL CE; *chain mail +1, shield +1, bastard sword +2;* potion of *extra-healing;* potion of *levitation.*

Radcliffe: AC 3; MV 9"; F3; hp 25; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +2; S 16, I 13, W 12, D 10, C 16, Ch 16, Co 15; AL CE; chain mail, shield, *spear +1, ring of protection +1,* potion of *gaseous form.*

The conditions of the encounter with these men vary depending on the circumstances. If the bandits have been alerted by the gas trap in area 3, one of their number is spying on room 4 while the others ready themselves. If the PCs return from the crypt area laden with treasure, the watchman calls for his comrades to join him in an ambush.

If the bandits are taken unawares, all but perhaps one of these men are playing cards at the table. There is a 60% chance that either Dougal or Radcliffe is sleeping on the lower bunk in the alcove behind the curtain (without armor or weapons).

If alerted to the party's intrusion, the bandits have readied themselves, forming a semicircle in front of the entryway so that each can have no more than a single opponent. Also, after waking (or in advance of joining a melee), one of the two leaders opens the secret door to the chamber (area 12) beyond their sleeping alcove. All the bandits fight viciously, taking extra time to behead a fallen PC (taking 1-3 rounds) before moving on to another!

If the fight is not going their way, Dougal and Radcliffe put an escape plan into play, leaving their underlings to fend for themselves. Dougal dashes into the secret room (area 12), closing and barring the door behind him. Radcliffe, meanwhile, drinks his potion of *gaseous form,* then floats outside and across the lake to safety.

After barring the secret door, Dougal grabs one of the dead bodies stored in the small room, shoulders it, and exits through the outside secret door. He then runs north to the water's edge, pushes the floating body out into the water to be devoured by the piranha, and voices a bloodcurdling scream as he climbs a nearby tree. As the PCs approach, he quaffs his potion of *extra-healing.*

If the party is fooled by Dougal's ploy (the DM shouldn't give out any hints), the bandit leader remains hidden in the tree until nightfall, at which time he makes a run for it through the shallow water by the southeastern shore of the island. If the PCs spot Dougal perched in the tree, he drinks his potion of *levitation* and kicks off from the tree to drift over the lake and out of missile range. He attempts to rise at a rate of 20' per round to an altitude out of reach of arrows and sling bullets if such are used against him. His speed horizontally will be 60' per round, assuming little or no wind at the DM's discretion.

The ale in the council chamber is all of rather poor quality. Three of the kegs are full, but the fourth is almost empty. Each keg holds 25 gallons and can be sold for a mere 5 gp. The wine, on the other hand, is of very high quality, having been made by (and stolen from) the finest vintner in Turthan. There are 13 bottles, worth 25 gp each.

If the PCs attempt to sell the familiar wine in Turthan, they will likely be arrested for banditry, an offense carrying a one year term of imprisonment and a 500-gp fine. If, on the other hand, they can prove their innocence (by producing the bandits' bodies or some tomb treasure, for example), the PCs are hailed as heroes, gaining a 100-gp reward as well as public commendations (as soon as their claims can be verified).

The only other items of value to be found in this room are 138 sp and 16 gp spread out on the table, and a locked and poison-needle-trapped chest in the alcove (it contains 653 gp, 892 ep, and 1,216 sp).

12. Storage Room for the Dead.

The smell of death lingers in this enclosed chamber. Two large, bulky bags lie jumbled on the floor.

There are two bodies in this room (minus one which Dougal may have taken). These corpses, saved from the bandits' most recent raid, will be used either to sweeten deals with lizard man mercenaries or to feed the island's aquatic guardians. The bandits try to replace the oldest stored corpses whenever possible in order to maintain some degree of "freshness."

Two iron bars lean against the west wall. These can be set in place on either or both of the inward-opening secret doors in times of emergency.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs destroy the bandit ring, the citizens of both Moorwall and Turthan are very appreciative. If the adventurers return to Moorwall, they are greeted with a hearty welcome by one and all. The locals are anxious for the party to remain in their community, but the PCs will likely experience too much harassment for their tastes. Laric, the inn's bartender, tries to procure a low-interest loan from them so that he can build his own inn. Alonso, the cook, begs, borrows, or steals from the party in order to get out from under his debts. Solemn, the innkeeper (if still alive and not exposed as a bandit), is obsequious in the extreme, hoping to finagle as much favor and coinage from the PCs as possible. Damber, the guard captain, insists that the PCs accompany him to Turthan so that he can parade them (or, more precisely, himself) about the capital.

If the PCs managed to extract riches from the tomb without slaying all the bandits (particularly if the ringleaders, Dougal and Radcliffe, are still alive), the party may wish to quickly leave the area. When the banditry continues, the local folk will not only be suspicious of the origins of the party's loot, but they will also soon begin accusing the PCs of being part of the gang.

No matter how successful the adventure, the Moorwall area may not hold the PCs' interest for long. Eventually some new map or mysterious legend will turn up, leading the group elsewhere to seek out greater treasure hoards and even greater dangers.

(See next page for new magical items and random encounter tables.)

New Magical Items

Ring of Clear Thought: Similar to a *ring of free action,* this item diminishes the chance for others to gain control over the wearer, but whereas a *ring of free action* limits attempts to restrain the wearer's physical capabilities, a *ring of clear thought* is particularly attuned to those spells that affect mental capacities. The wearer gains immunity to the effects of certain mind-based spells such as *sleep, charm,* and *fear.* He also gains a +4 bonus to his saving throw vs. the *psionic blast* power.

If an undead creature wears this ring, it is afforded some protection against the *turning* ability of clerics. A cleric's chance to turn the creature is determined as if the cleric were four levels lower than his actual level of experience.

While the ring is worn, the wearer gains the temporary benefit of adding one point to his intelligence score (18 maximum), just as if he were using a scarlet and blue *ioun stone.* All effects of the ring are lost if the ring is removed or destroyed.

XP Value: 1,500 **GP Value:** 7,500

Dalvan's circlet: This magical, ring-shaped head ornament gives off dweomers of both the alteration and enchantment/charm sorts. After a PC places it on his head, he is immediately affected as if a *feeblemind* spell were cast on him (no saving throw), but this condition lasts for only five rounds. Furthermore, the circlet magically binds itself to the wearer's head. It remains so attached for a period of 10 rounds, during which time the only means by which it can be removed are either by the hands of a magic-user of at least 16th level or by a *wish* spell.

The mage Dalvan Meir created this device in order to insure his ability to enter the wearer's mind from his *magic jar* crystal. He also wanted to allow himself an easy means of egress from his desolate tomb, so he gave the circlet the additional power to force back the iron barrier sprung by the trap at area 3.

XP Value: nil **GP Value:** 1,000

Random Encounter Tables

Check for encounters twice during the day and twice each night. Encounters occur on a roll of 1 on 1d10. Each encounter type occurs only once.

West of Melarin River (roll 1d20)

1-2. Grippli (5): AC 9; MV 9"//15"; HD 1+1; hp 6 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA surprise on 1-4; AL N.

3-4. Lizard men (1-2): AC 5; MV 6"//12"; HD 2+1; hp 10 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-8; AL N.

5-7. Giant beaver: AC 6; MV 6"//12"; HD 4; hp 19; #AT 1; Dmg 4-16; AL N.

8-12. Giant lizards (2): AC 5; MV 15"; HD 3+1; hp 18, 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; AL N.

13-16. Bear trap: Random victim takes 2d6 hp damage and is trapped unless he rolls less than his dexterity. The trapped individual takes 1d6 hp more damage if freed with help or 4d6 hp more if freeing himself.

17-20. Mire (only when off road): Each PC in the party must save vs. dexterity on 1d20 or be caught in a mire, slowly sinking and requiring help to get out unless not wearing any armor (in which case he can float and "swim" to shore).

East of Melarin River (roll 1d20)

1-3. Poisonous snake: AC 5; MV 15"; HD 2+1; hp 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison; AL N.

4-5. Crocodile: AC 5; MV 6"//12"; HD 3; hp 18; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/1-12; AL N.

6-10. Lizard men (1-4): See "West of River" encounters.

11-13. Troglodytes (3): AC 5; MV 12"; HD 2; hp 10 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/2-5; SA stench; AL CE.

14-16. Ghouls (2): AC 6; MV 9"; HD 2; hp 11 each; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; SD immune to *sleep, charm* spells; AL CE.

17-20. Mire (only when off road): See "West of River" encounters. Ω

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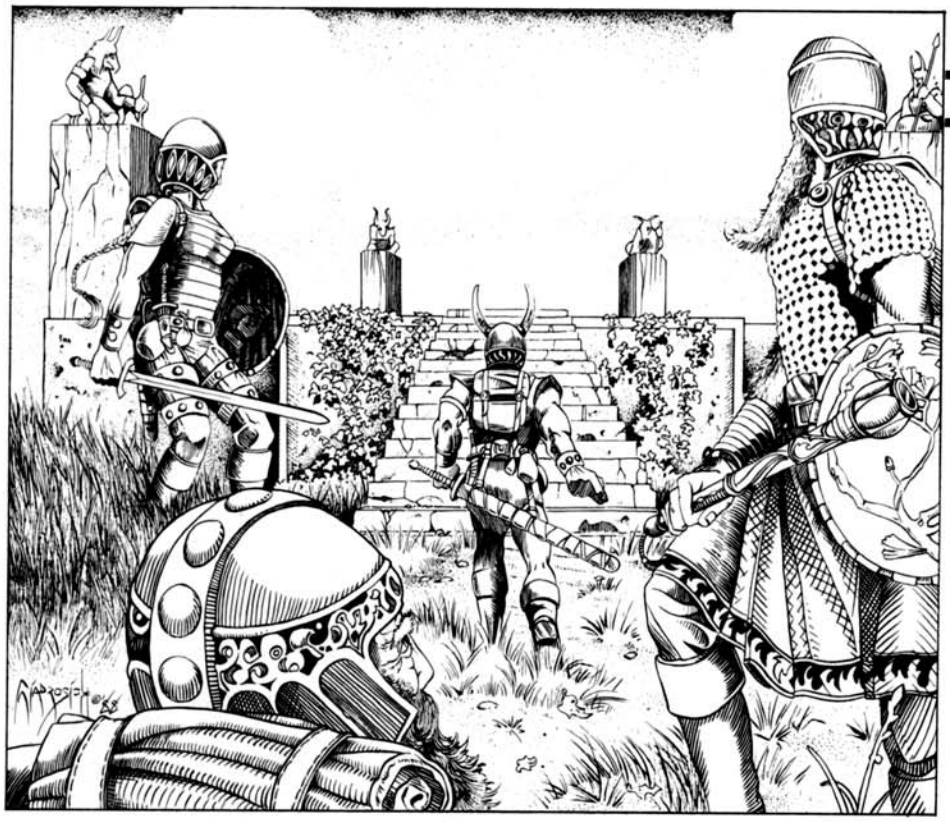


THE TREASURE VAULT OF KASIL

BY PATRICK G. GOSHTIGIAN AND NICK KOPSINIS

Great riches and sudden death, free for the taking.

Artwork by Bob Gladrosich

Patrick Goshtigian and Nick Kopsinis are now in the waning period of their college years. Since they attend school on opposite coasts, they write productively only during school breaks when they are together, but they maintain a good correspondence of ideas throughout the year. They like their modules to provide complex challenges to players while providing an unusual setting for all.

"The Treasure Vault of Kasil" is designed for use with the AD&D® game system. It is recommended that a party of 3-5 characters of levels 5-7 be used to complete this adventure. However, it should be possible for either a smaller party, possibly only a single character of high level, or a larger party of lesser levels to attempt to enter the vault. In any case, all parties should find the treasure vault challenging as it will take careful thought to successfully complete the adventure. Attempts at using sheer force will only result in failure. Because of the lethal nature of the traps involved, mortality rates among less cautious groups may be very high.

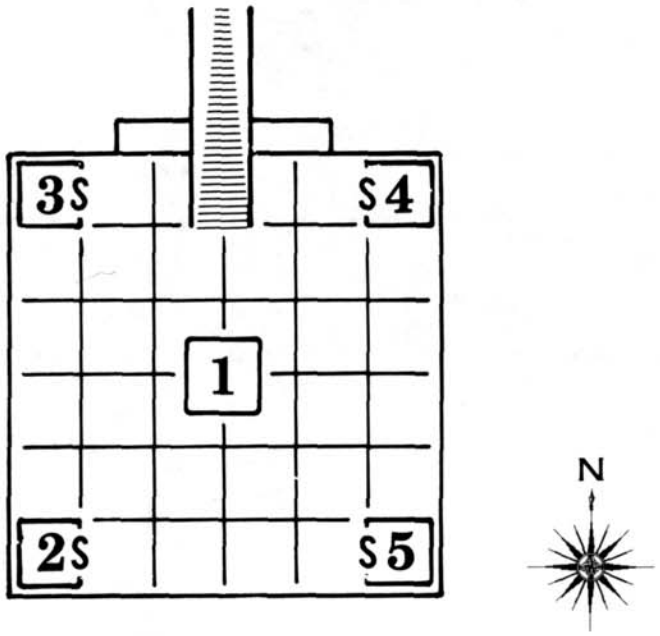
Adventure Background

For many years, the royal family of Kasil ruled the Kingdom of Grenthorn. The kingdom prospered for decades, but in the end could not survive the unceasing wars with neighboring countries. Finally, the kingdom was toppled and memory of it faded into the history books. Even the buildings have eroded away through the many years, and all that is left are ruins. New countries have formed, dividing the land that was once the Kingdom of Grenthorn between them.

It has long been known that most of the royal treasures of the Kasil family were kept in a special vault in their palace, which rested atop Mount Ranthor. There is nothing left of the palace except for a few crumbling walls, but the treasure vault remains. Many have attempted to retrieve the treasure, but no one has ever succeeded. Many adventurers have simply left in frustration; some have died. All attempts to enter the vault by magical means have failed. Supposedly, there are keys which allow easy access to the vault, but these were lost long ago with the royal family's demise.

Mount Ranthor is in a friendly area,

THE PLATFORM



1 square = 5′

and any who are willing to make the long, tiring climb to its summit find the vault and deserted ruins. However, the vault itself is said to be inhabited by strange guardians, for lights can be seen glowing on top of the vault at night. There have even been stories about the four statues that rest atop the vault attacking any who attempt to enter.

It is said that the Kasil family was so confident of the security of their vault that they invited thieves to attempt to enter it. The family has long since died, but the challenge lives on.

For the Dungeon Master

The Kasil family did make the challenge, but no one ever profited from it. The vault's traps are not impossible to overcome, but it will take determination, careful thought, and teamwork.

The adventurers should be able to learn additional information about the vault from the few survivors in the area who attempted to enter it. None of this information should be very specific, and none of it should give any information about the traps. It should be only descriptive information about the appearance of the outside of the vault; assume that anyone who came close enough to see a trap operate didn't live to tell about it. Interestingly, adventurers who previously went to the vault have followed another rumor that those who leave the vault as they found it shall not be cursed. This rumor, though untrue, has caused previous (and unsuccessful) groups to move all items back into their original resting places. Even the more pragmatic and less superstitious adventurers preferred not to make the going easy for those who followed them.

The area around Mount Ranthor is sparsely inhabited, but there is a small village at its base where the adventurers can rest, purchase basic supplies, and possibly find a guide. The climb up the mountain is along an abandoned road which is now overgrown with vegetation. Encounters should be checked three times within the day's travel, using the encounter tables found on pages 186-187 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*. Use the table for temperate, inhabited lands with rough terrain. There is a 10% chance of an encounter at each check. If the adventurers leave the village at dawn and travel all day, they should reach the vault just before dusk.

Most of the people in the surrounding area realize that there are large sums of treasure inside the vault. If the PCs appear to have a chance of getting inside, they will most likely attract all sorts of bandits, thieves, and charlatans who will attempt to take the treasure from them after they have retrieved it from the vault.

The Platform

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> You arrive at the vault as the sun is sinking below the horizon. A cool breeze blows as night sets in. In the midst of toppled stone walls and crumbled buildings is a 15′-high stone platform about 60′ square, whose sides are overgrown with ivy. A set of stone stairs rises to the top of the platform. Facing the center of the platform, one at each corner, statues of winged humanoids stand on high stone pedestals.

If the PCs wait until after the sun has set, they see that the platform is lit by a faint green light which comes from the statues. This light is magical and goes away at dawn. After sunset, encounters should be checked for at double normal frequency if the party is within 75 yards of the vault, as the light attracts night predators.

Once the PCs climb the stairs (or use other means to reach the top of the platform), read the description that follows:

> As you reach the top of the platform, you see that its surface is also partially overgrown by ivy. In the center is a 10′ × 10′ block of granite 3′ high. It has many inscriptions on its sides, and its top appears to be flat. The pedestals at the corners of the platform are also made of granite and are 10′ squares, each 9′ high. Upon each pedestal is a stone gargoyle of rather large size, peering down toward the block in the center of the platform. The eyes of the gargoyles are green stones. Three of the gargoyles are each missing one eye.

The gargoyles radiate magic from their emerald eyes (worth 5,000 gp each), which emit the greenish light during the night. The light has an effect on all who stand in it for longer than one hour. After that period of time, a saving throw vs. spells must be made every half hour while in the green light's 10′ radius. If the saving throw is failed, the PC falls asleep until the sun rises (treat as a spell cast by an 11th-level magic-user) and cannot be awakened other than by the use of either a *remove curse* or *dispel magic* spell. This is another reason why nighttime predators are attracted to the vault, for they often find vulnerable prey here.

Removing the emerald eyes is not difficult, but anyone who does so must also make a saving throw vs. spells. If the save fails, the PC becomes very drowsy for the next 24 hours, at the end of which time a subsequent saving throw is allowed; such saving throws occur every 24 hours while the PC is in possession of the gem. While drowsy, all of the PC's ability scores are lowered by three, and nothing short of a *wish* spell can prevent this effect. Since the drowsiness takes 3-6 rounds to come to full effect, it may not necessarily be attributed to the gem. The effects are negated if the gem is returned to its empty eye socket.

The entire vault and platform are protected by elaborate magical spells. Attempts at breaking through the walls always fail. Spells such as *dig, passwall, stone shape, earthquake, disintegrate, transmute rock to mud,* or even a destructive *wish* spell have no effect. In addition, the protective spells also prevent magical entry by such means as *teleport, dimension door, blink,* or *wish* spells.

1. False Entrance.

> A 10′ × 10′ area on the platform to the south of the granite block has been worn smooth. The inscriptions completely encircle the block but cannot be read. The top of the block has been cut smooth.

The inscriptions are magical; they require a *read magic* spell in order to be deciphered: "The entrance to the vault is beneath this block." The block moves to the south if it is pushed with a combined strength of 40.

When the PCs have moved the granite block, read the following:

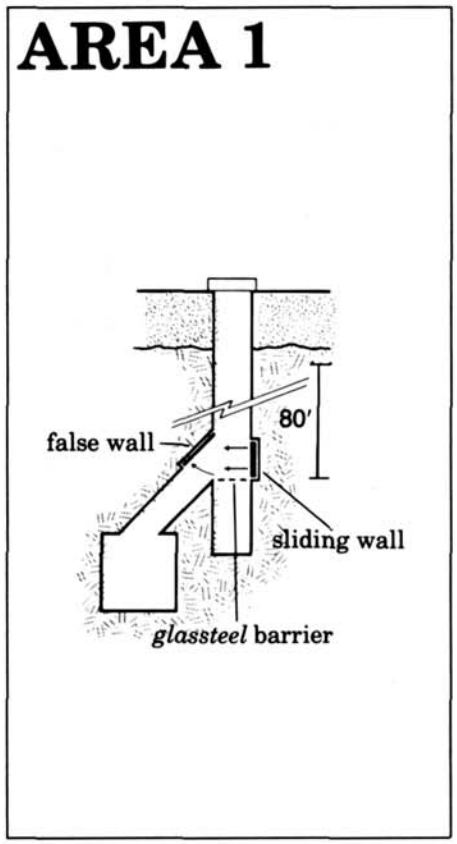
> Now that the granite block has been moved, you see that there is a lead plate, 9′ on each side, that lies beneath it. The square is level with the platform, and at its center is a small silver handle that appears to have been designed to twist.

The handle twists easily, and when this is done the plate slowly slides to the east.

> As the lead plate slides out of the way, musty smelling air rises and you see a very deep pit lit by a faint flickering light, at the bottom of which lies a vast amount of treasure. There are piles of coins, gems, jewelry, weapons, and armor. However, the walls of the pit are lined with thousands of small, razor-sharp blades which seem to have a liquid dripping from them. It looks like a very difficult journey down the shaft.

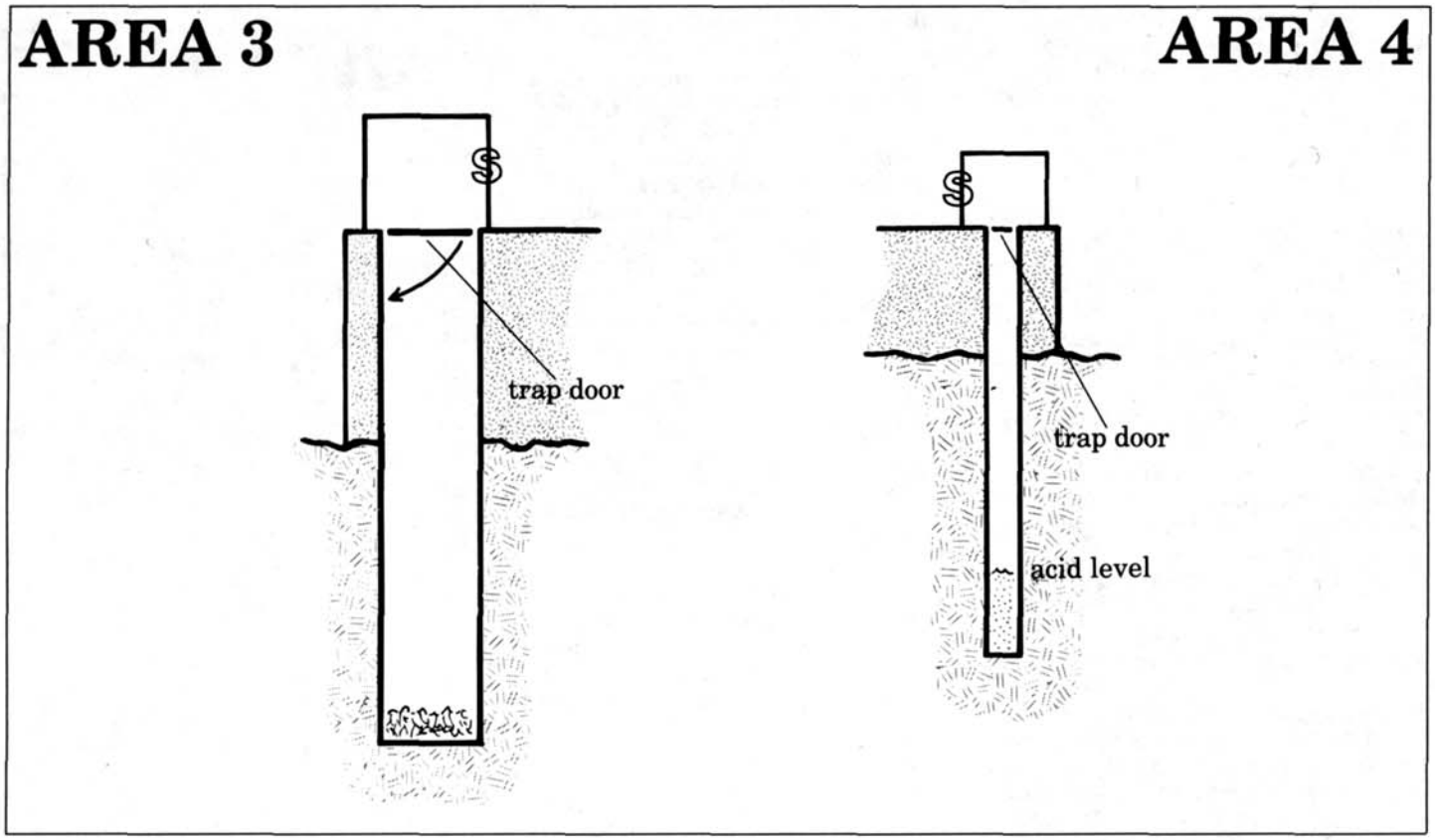
The treasure at the bottom of the pit is illusory. However, this will not be evident to the adventurers even if they reach the bottom of the shaft because of the design of the pit. The shaft is a total of 120′ deep, but 100′ down is a *glassteel* barrier. The "treasure" in the bottom of the pit has been cast as a *permanent illusion* (sixth-level illusionist spell cast at the 13th level of ability), giving the appearance of a large room filled with treasure and lit by flickering torchlight. Anything dropped down the shaft stops at the 100′ level, leaving the illusion intact. If the *glassteel* barrier is destroyed and a successful *dispel magic* spell is cast, the illusion is negated; it cannot be dispelled otherwise. No smoke or the smell of smoke from the torches drifts up the shaft, and any PC recognizing this should be wary of the area.

Descending the walls of the pit is made nearly impossible by the small blades. Anyone who tries takes 1-10 hp damage per 10′ of contact with the blades. The liquid, secreted from the walls of the shaft, is activated when the granite block above is moved. It continues to drip until the block is back in place. The liquid evaporates after one hour, and there is enough liquid for 12 hours of slow dripping. If a person descending the shaft is cut by the blades, he must save vs. poison or be *slowed* for one hour. If a PC is lowered over the edge on a rope, the blades automatically cut the rope and the PC falls to the *glassteel* barrier, taking 20d6 hp damage. The bottom 10′ section of the shaft is free of the blades.



If over 100 lbs. of weight comes to rest on the barrier, a trap springs into motion. In one segment, a tightly coiled spring lodged behind the bottom 10′ of the east wall releases tension, causing the wall to move. This rapid action sweeps everything on the barrier through the west wall, which is a false wall (detected as a secret door) hinged at the top. Anyone caught in this trap slides down a 20′ slide into a 20′-square room with many 2′-long spikes set into the floor. The complete process delivers 6-21 (3d6 + 3) hp damage. The room is filled with the bones and decaying gear of previous adventurers. It is this thick layer of debris that cushions falling PCs from the spikes and the damage they would normally cause.

Among the debris are the remains of 35 deceased adventurers of various



races. If the room is searched thoroughly, salvageable gear to be found includes 10 daggers; a suit of chain mail; a 50′ length of rope; many short (2′-5′) sections of rope; a wine skin holding very old wine (worth 100 gp); and a small wooden box that contains a candle, a spoon, and an empty flask.

Climbing the walls and slide is possible, but any attempts to pull the false wall open from the inside create a good chance of falling. A successful dexterity check on 1d20 indicates the opening of the door and passage into the pit. Failure of the roll indicates the character has fallen again, taking only 2-12 hp damage this time.

The spring trap takes two rounds to reset itself, after which the trap can be reactivated as before. The spring trap can be bypassed through a number of creative means. Since it takes two rounds to reset, it could be deactivated by something blocking the return to its original position. In addition, anyone who weighs less than 100 lbs. can easily avoid activating the trap.

The lead plate above closes automatically, as does the granite block, after remaining open for three hours.

2. Empty Pedestal. The secret door to the room within the southwest pedestal can be found in the east face of the pedestal. To open it, a combined strength of 20 must be used to push it inward. The door stays open for three rounds and then closes automatically. Anyone inside the pedestal is then effectively trapped, as the door cannot be opened from the inside. Of course, PCs outside the pedestal can still open the door as indicated above.

> When the door opens you see that the inside of the pedestal is empty except for a pile of old bones and rubbish in the southwest corner. There appears to be an inscription carved in the west wall.

The bones and rubbish are the remains of an adventurer who didn't have anyone outside to reopen the door for him. This trap has been sprung recently, as the body is still partially rotting and the gear is in fair condition. There is a *dagger +1,* a pouch containing three tiger eyes (worth 10 gp each), 24 sp, and a *girdle of stone giant strength* still on the body. The door has been chipped away on the inside, apparently in a futile effort to escape.

The inscription on the wall has been partially chipped away but still reads: "Foolhardy thief! You'll need to be much smarter to survive our vault."

3. False Floor. The secret door in the east face of the northwest pedestal can be found on a 4 in 6 chance (5 in 6 for thieves and elves). It is locked with a normal mechanical lock. Once the door is opened, a spray of flaming oil jets forth from the gargoyle's mouth above, causing all in a 10′ square in front of the door to take 3-18 hp damage the first round and 1-6 hp damage the next round as the oil continues to burn (save vs. breath weapon for half damage).

> After opening the door, you see that the inside of the pedestal is empty. An easily recognizable tile mosaic of the gargoyle above spitting flames decorates the opposite wall.

The inside of the pedestal is empty, but the floor is actually a trapdoor that opens to a deep pit. If more than 110

lbs. rests on the floor, the trapdoor swings open, dumping the entire contents of the room down a 40'-deep pit for 10d6 hp falling damage. The trapdoor then closes, resetting itself. At the bottom of the pit are nine skeletons and two decomposed bodies from which some treasure can be salvaged. Among the rotting backpacks, smashed vials, broken spears, crushed armor, and bent swords are 309 cp, 54 sp, 125 gp, 38 pp, a peridot (worth 500 gp), a statuette of a rot grub (worth 650 gp), and a *shield +1*.

4. Acid Pit. The secret door in the west face of the northeast pedestal appears to be an illusory wall (a *permanent illusion* cast at the 13th level of ability). If an adventurer examines the side of the pedestal that contains this door, a saving throw vs. spells is allowed. If it is successful, the adventurer is not affected by the *illusion* and can see the entrance.

When the door is opened, read:

> Through the opening in the wall you can see that the pedestal is empty. In the center of the floor, a 5' × 5' opening leads to a pit which seems very deep. Slimy handholds descend along the western wall of the pit, but it is too dark to see the bottom.

The pit is 50' deep. The handholds line the wall to the very bottom of the pit and are quite sturdy (the slime has no effect on grip, as it is easily wiped away). The bottom 10' of the pit is filled with an odorless acid that appears to be water. This acid is fairly weak and does no damage unless in contact with skin for longer than four rounds, after which it begins to cause 1-4 hp damage per round. Any items exposed to the acid for longer than four rounds must save vs. acid (at +2) each round thereafter or be destroyed. Armor does not protect from this, as the fluid soaks through everything before it starts to work.

The floor of the pit has a 3' × 3' steel plate imbedded in it. This false door cannot be moved and is not affected by the acid.

The acid is the home of a *crystal ooze* (AC 8; MV 1"//3"; HD 4; hp 28; #AT 1; Dmg 4-16; SA/SD see *Monster Manual II;* AL N) which is immune to the acid and 75% invisible as well. It lives on creatures that stray into the pit. Any remains from past victims have been consumed by the acid.

5. Vault Entrance. This secret door can be found in the west face of the southeast pedestal. Four keyholes surround a small knob indented in the stone, obviously a handhold to pull the door open. The keys have been lost long ago (see "Concluding the Adventure"), but they are not needed to open the door. The keys deactivate all of the traps in this section.

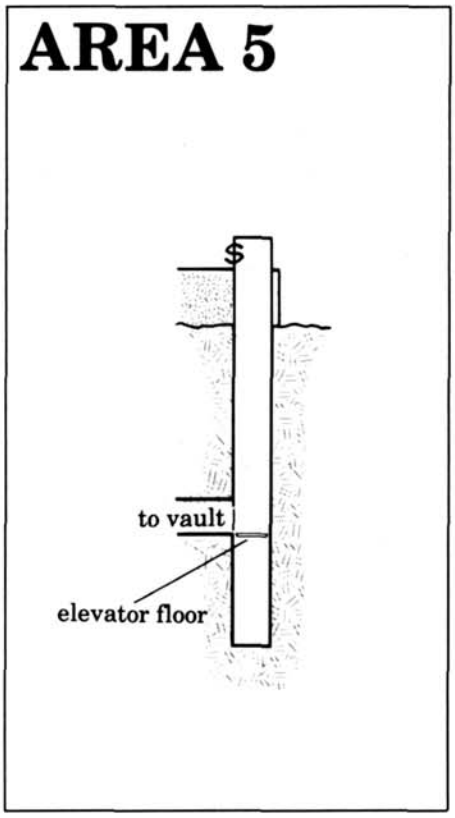
> Once the door is pulled open, you see that the pedestal is hollow and there is no floor. The room is lit by a circle of light attached to the ceiling of the pedestal. The pit before you appears to be about 70' deep. A strong wind enters the pedestal through the doorway from above your heads and swirls into the pit. The wall in front of you is adorned with stone heads of various monsters — orcs, goblins, ogres, cyclopskin, norkers, and bugbears. There are 12 heads in all.

The circle of light is the result of a *continual light* spell cast on the ceiling. Under normal operation (using all four keys), the floor of the pit would have risen to the door level, stayed for two turns, and then slowly descended. This elevator allowed easy transport of treasure into and out of the vault. However, when the keys are not used, the floor remains at the 70' level of the pit. The strong wind is the equivalent of a *gust of wind* and does not allow stable flight or *levitation* within the pit. The wind originates from the mouth of the gargoyle above. It is activated when the door is opened without the use of the keys, and deactivated when the door is closed.

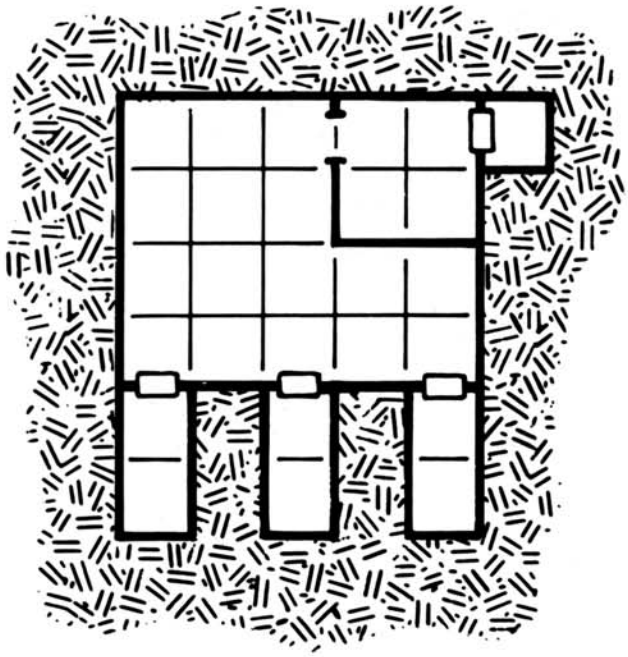
Seventy feet below the entrance, in the western wall, is a locked steel door. There is only a 10% chance of seeing this door from the top of the pit. The door opens upward by pulling it from an inlaid handhold in its base.

The elevator floor has many pressure plates that will be hit 90% of the time anyone walks upon it, activating a trap. Once this trap is set off, the floor rises 1', blocking the door from being opened, and a gas issues forth from small holes in the walls, filling the shaft for 30' above the level of the floor. The gas dissipates in one hour if the wind is allowed to continue swirling into the pit; otherwise it takes 10 hours to dissipate. Any character whose skin is in contact with the gas must save vs. poison (at −2) or react as to a *flesh to stone* spell; a successful save causes nausea for 10 rounds. Only one saving throw is made per PC. In any case, the effect of the gas is immediate. Two rounds later, the floor lowers 1' and tilts to the east at a 75° angle, dumping all upon it into a 20'-deep pit below (for 2d6 hp falling damage). The floor then returns to its original horizontal position. The pit below is filled with shattered stone bodies and one dead body. There is nothing of value here.

If any PCs manage to avoid the trap, a second is waiting. If the lock on the steel door is successfully picked, a powerful electrical shock is given. If a save vs. paralyzation does not negate this shock, the PC opening the lock falls to the floor paralyzed for one hour (with a 95% chance of tripping a pressure plate). The door relocks and resets its charge in five turns. No damage is taken from the shock.



THE VAULT



1 square = 5′

The Vault

Once the adventurers have made it through the door, read:

> You have entered a dank-smelling room, 20′ square and 10′ high. This must be the true vault of the Kasils. Has someone already emptied it of treasure? Apparently so, as there is nothing in the chamber in which you now stand.

In fact, the adventurers are in an antechamber of the vault. If a close inspection of the wall by the door is made, a group of four keyholes may be found (1 in 6 chance). They are in the same pattern as those at the entrance to the vault (area 5), and the same keys could also be used here to deactivate the final traps. The first of these traps was activated when the door to the vault was opened. At that time, a *wall of stone* (cast at the 11th level of ability) closed off the archway to the actual vault. Unlike the rest of the walls in the vault and platform, this wall can be destroyed in the usual ways. It is otherwise 80% indistinguishable from the other walls.

Beyond the archway is the vault proper, with three locked steel doors on the southern wall. Behind each door is a small room (10′ × 20′) with shelves holding various treasures.

The western room contains coins — loose, bagged, and in chests. In all there are 25,309 cp, 20,562 sp, 11,589 ep, 12,340 gp, and 2,206 pp. As each PC enters this room, he becomes immediately inflicted with one type of insanity (determined randomly from those listed in the *DMG*, pages 83-84). While in the room, there is no cure for the insanity. Furthermore, for every round the PC stays in the room, there is a 1% cumulative chance that the insanity will become permanent. The insanity is otherwise dispelled upon exiting this *cursed* room. No saving throws are allowed.

The middle room glistens with gems and jewelry. There are two remarkable pieces of jewelry here: a platinum scepter set with three large emeralds (worth 23,000 gp total), and a platinum and gold necklace set with diamonds (worth 10,500 gp total). The rest of the jewelry is composed of 100 small pieces worth a total of 19,560 gp. The 300 gems are small, semiprecious stones worth a total of 26,000 gp. If the platinum scepter is removed from its shelf, a trap causes the ceiling blocks and walls to come crashing down, crushing all within the room as well as any remaining treasure.

The eastern room contains miscellaneous items. There are: potions of *invisibility* and *water breathing;* a vial of *oil of acid resistance;* a scroll containing the spells *magic missile, fireball, wall of force,* and *lightning bolt* at 15th level; a *rod of flailing;* a *wand of wonder* (25 charges); a *wand of frost* (four charges); a *bag of tricks;* a suit of *chain mail +2;* a *broad sword +1;* a *deck of illusions;* a *ring of jumping;* a box filled with *dust of tracelessness;* and a *gem of seeing.*

At the center of the floor of this room, a 7′ × 7′ trapdoor swings open when more than 75 lbs. is placed on it. All caught in this trap fall into a 25′-deep pit that holds a thin layer of clear blue liquid that instantly freezes to solid ice all that it touches. Frozen PCs and items melt at the same rate as normal ice until they are completely liquefied or a *dispel magic* spell is cast (treat as a spell cast at the 11th level of ability).

Furthermore, each of the treasures is guarded by one random color of the spell *prismatic sphere.* These miniature spheres (they are just big enough to surround a particular item) can be seen and negated as noted in the *Players Handbook,* page 93. They do not cause blindness in lower-level characters.

Concluding the Adventure

The adventurers may not succeed in entering the vault on the first try. The vault can become an ongoing challenge to which the party returns from time to time. It is obvious that entrance to the vault would be easy if one were to posses the keys. If the DM so desires, the search for these keys can be made into an adventure. This option might be particularly appealing if the PCs have been entirely unsuccessful with the vault. However, the keys should be *very* difficult to find.

If the party is successful, however, and attempts to get all the treasure out of the vault (which would most likely require multiple trips to and from the surface), it will be very hard to keep this secret from potential thieves in the area. The adventurers may find themselves having more trouble defending the treasure than they had retrieving it from the vault. Ω

OF NESTS AND NATIONS

BY RANDY MAXWELL

Arson, rioting, sabotage, murder — and no suspects.

Artwork by Paul Jaquays

"This module," Randy says, "was written on the floor, while in a constant state of skirmishing with my dog. While working on manuscripts, I make piles of the pages, maps, and reference books to keep them within easy reach. The dog insists he has the right to sleep on these piles. I, on the other hand, prefer that such soporific excursions take place elsewhere. To date, the border dispute has not been settled to the complete satisfaction of either party."

"Of Nests and Nations" is a D&D® module for 3-5 characters of 8th to 12th level. The adventure takes place in Specularum, the capital city of the Grand Duchy of Karameikos. The Dungeon Master may wish to consult the D&D Companion and Masters sets for details concerning some aspects of this module. The gazetteer GAZ1 *The Grand Duchy of Karameikos* is highly recommended for play; it can be used to add detail and atmosphere, and to provide a deep and vivid background for the adventure. Many major NPCs mentioned herein (such as the Duke, Baron von Hendriks, and Teldon) are also found within that work, though the DM can easily create new statistics for these characters. The DM may also place Specularum in his own game world, using the city map provided and renaming the city and its major factions as necessary.

This adventure deals primarily with the hivebrood. The DM can find information detailing these monsters in the *Creature Catalog,* pages 68-70. However, enough information on the hivebrood is presented in this module to allow the DM to conduct the adventure even without this book.

Adventure Background

Specularum is in an uproar. In the last few weeks, guards on the city walls have been murdered at their posts; a watchman was hurled screaming from the Hightower; fires have broken out in the city; warehouses filled with goods have burned to the ground; conjured monsters have appeared in the marketplaces and done a great deal of damage; and water termites have appeared in Mirror Bay, doing damage to both docks and ships.

No design or pattern can be found in the murders, fires, or conjurations. Traladaran and Thyatian guards have

Rumor Table

Choose the appropriate statements from among those in brackets to suit the situation. The DM may wish to include Baron von Hendriks and the Black Eagle Barony as names mentioned in the rumors. Thyatian nobles always blame the Traladaran clans; the Traladaran clans, of course, blame the Thyatian nobles. In a mixed group of Thyatians and Traladarans, elements from the Foreign Quarter are blamed. It is likely that people will accuse groups or organizations they have personal grudges against. All of the rumors are false, but the PCs have no way to know this at first. Some of the rumors are known to be false by the Duke and his advisors, but information on the veracity of a rumor may not yet have reached the general public.

1. Some [minor Thyatian nobles; lesser Traladaran clans; foreigners of all sorts] have joined together to overthrow the Duke. They are using fire and murder to get rid of anyone who stands in their way. They are not above murdering or burning some of their own in order to avoid suspicion.
2. The Duke was nearly assassinated by someone using a crossbow. A [Thyatian; Traladaran; foreign] quarrel was definitely used in the attempt.
3. The [Traladaran clans; Thyatian nobles; foreigners] have secretly assembled a fleet of ships and mean to breach the sea gates and sack the city.
4. The Immortals are wreaking havoc on the city for failure to follow the principles of the [Church of Karameikos; Church of Traladara; Cult of Halav]. Only strict adherence to those principles will convince the Immortals to show mercy.
5. The [Kingdom of Thieves; Veiled Society; Iron Ring] is directly responsible for all the trouble.
6. The [Church of Karameikos; Church of Traladara; Cult of Halav] is responsible for the fires and murders.
7. The Patriarch of the [Church of Karameikos; Church of Traladara; Cult of Halav] has offended creatures from another plane of existence. They will continue their attacks on the city until the Patriarch is overthrown.
8. Many wells and fountains in the city have been poisoned by [Thyatians; Traladarans; foreigners]. The poison causes a mild insanity, making people attack one another or commit suicide. When things get bad enough, the poisoners will charge a very high price for the antidote.
9. The [Order of the Griffon; Magicians' Guild; Elvenguard] has something to do with all these strange goings-on.
10. The Elvenguard and Admiral Hyraksos are using the murders and fires as an excuse to [depose the Duke and establish a military rule; have the Duke raise taxes so he can increase the amount of money spent on the military; form a secret network of spies and informers to spy on the people of Specularum].
11. The fires and murders are part of a complicated extortion plot by some group in the [Old Quarter; Nest; Foreign Quarter].
12. Specularum is under a *curse,* and the only way to lift it is to [depose the Duke and put a Traladaran in his place; rid the Duke's court of all Traladarans; rid the city of all foreigners].

Mob Clash Table

Each time a PC is involved in a clash of mobs, a riot, or a gang war, use this table. PCs must roll percentile dice for each listed incident. It is possible for everything below to happen to each PC within a single riot.

- — 5% chance of being knocked down and trampled by the mob for 2-8 hp damage.
- — 5% chance of having pocket picked of all money, with no chance to notice it.
- — 5% chance of having pocket picked of most valuable object (magical item, jewelry, etc.) with no chance to notice it.
- — 5% chance of being hit by projectile (rock, bottle, board, etc.) for 1-4 hp damage.
- — 5% chance of accidentally losing a valuable object in the crowd (DM's choice or random roll).
- — 5% chance of being mistaken for a hated enemy and attacked by a crowd of 5-10 **rioters** (AC 9; HD 1; hp 5 each; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Save F1; ML 10; AL N-C) armed with clubs and torches.
- — 5% chance of taking 1-6 hp damage from a militiaman's club by accident as the guard attempts to restore order.
- — 5% chance of being mistaken for a ringleader or person responsible for inciting the riot, thus being arrested by the militia. The arrested PC spends 4d6 + 12 hours in jail before being released.

been killed in about equal number. Traladaran clans and Thyatian nobles have all lost goods and buildings in fires. The conjured monsters have appeared at random with no set time or place of attack.

There is rising enmity between all factions in the city, and hard words are being spoken. Wild and exaggerated rumors run through the streets (see the Rumor Table). The PCs are likely to hear rumors anywhere, from the court of the Duke to the back alleys of the Old Quarter.

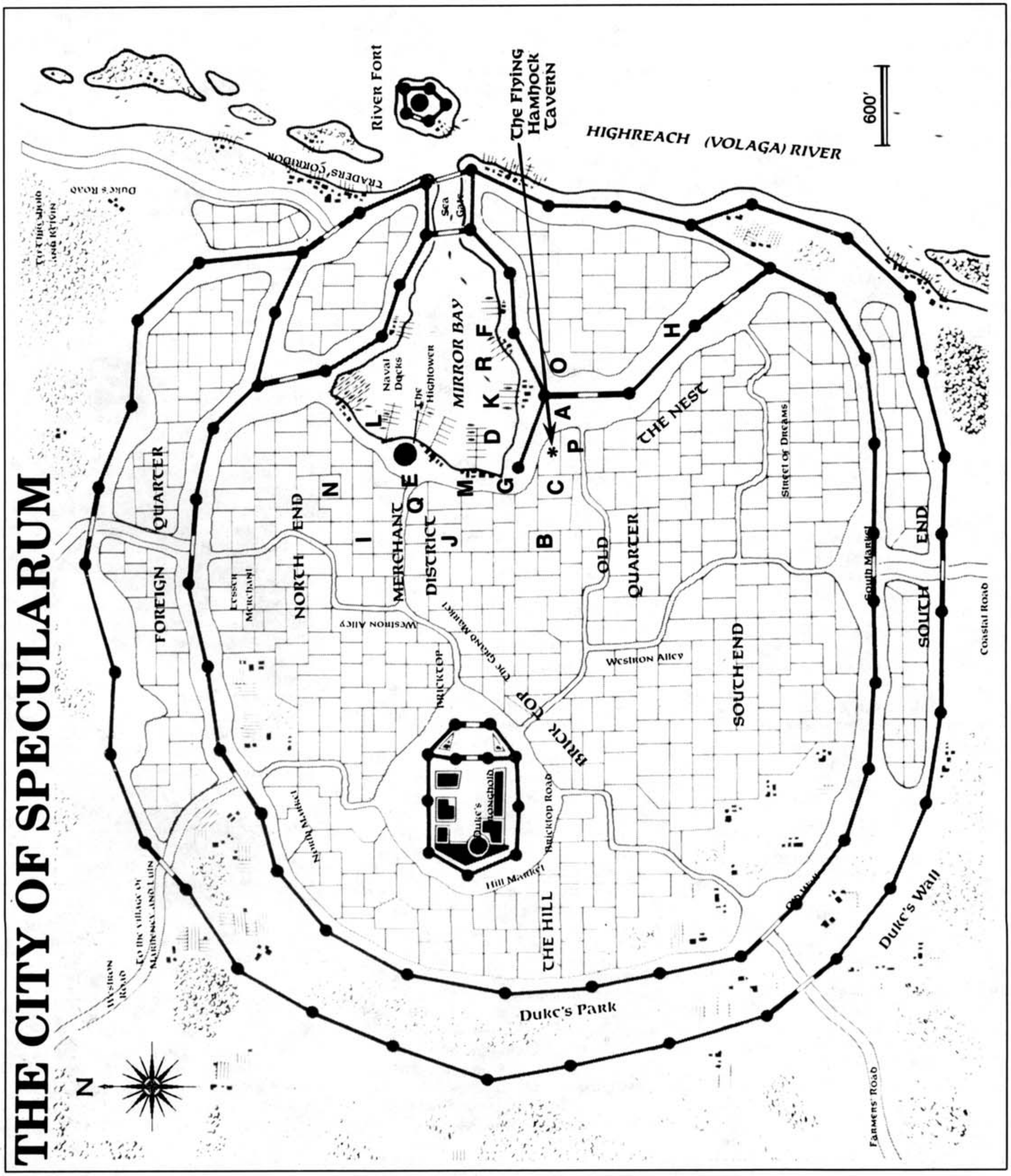
The separate factions all claim innocence and blame each other for the crimes. The thieves' guilds have sworn to the Duke that they are not responsible, but accuse one another. The Veiled Society has openly accused the Iron Ring of setting fires. The Kingdom of Thieves has blamed both the Iron Ring and the Veiled Society for the incidents, claiming the two are in league to overthrow the Duke. The Church of Karameikos, the Church of Traladara, and the Cult of Halav have called for calm, but each accuses the others of not doing enough to quell the unrest.

The streets are not safe at night. Old hatreds and long-forgotten rivalries and feuds have been inflamed. There are clashes between Traladaran and Thyatian mobs, foreigners and locals, and between various organized street gangs. The militia usually breaks up these riots before they turn deadly, but the clashes are becoming more frequent and more violent, and are involving more and more people. On any night PCs are in the streets, there is a 5% chance they become involved in one of these clashes (see the Mob Clash Table for the results of such involvement). The DM may place a clash or riot at any location and on any night desired.

The Duke and his advisors are very concerned over the growing unrest in Specularum. It has been decided that the Duke must do something — anything — in order to show the people he is still in charge. As the posted rewards are not bringing any results, the Duke has called a meeting of community leaders and other powerful individuals.

Audience with the Duke

Today is the 11th day of Vatermont. The PCs have been invited to the High Palace for an audience with the Duke. If the PCs are not already involved in the


THE CITY OF SPECULARUM
River Fort
The Flying Hamhock Tavern
HIGHREACH (VOLAGA) RIVER
600'
Traders' Corridor
Duke's Road
Sea Gate
MIRROR BAY
Naval Docks
The Hightower
THE NEST
FOREIGN QUARTER
NORTH END
Lesser Merchant
MERCHANT DISTRICT
OLD QUARTER
SOUTH END
Street of Dreams
South Market
Westron Alley
The Grand Market
BRICKTOP
BRICK TOP
Duke's Longhold
Bricktop Road
North Market
Hill Market
THE HILL
Duke's Park
Duke's Wall
Old Wall
Coastal Road
Farmers' Road
Westron Road
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duchy's affairs through friendship with the Duke or other political figures, they should be invited to attend the meeting because they are of high-enough level to be of service. Even if the PCs are not exactly respectable (like the envoys from the thieves' guilds), they are still invited to attend. Leaders of the various Traladaran clans, Thyatian nobles, representatives from all guilds (including thieves), and other dignitaries are in attendance. The Duke himself addresses the gathering:

> "Honored guests, nobles, and citizens: Due to the gravity of the situation, I will dispense with the usual introductions and honorifics. As you know, the unrest in our city is growing worse. My advisors and I have decided to pool all knowledge concerning recent events. In this way, we hope that your groups will work *with* rather than *against* each other, and time will not be wasted in the duplication of effort. Make no mistake; our Duchy itself is at risk. I needs the help and goodwill of all citizens, and before this is over, perhaps the help and goodwill of the Immortals themselves.
>
> "Above and beyond what I have already offered, I cannot post bounty or list reward for such service, for I know not what we are fighting or how such service should be honored. I can only say help will be rewarded most generously and hindrance punished most severely. I will leave you now to Lord Korrigan, who will explain the facts as we know them and share such information as we have. May the Immortals smile on you and your children; I bid you good day."

With these words, the Duke turns and leaves the hall. A personal audience can be arranged for the following day, but the Duke knows no more than is available from Lord Korrigan.

Lord Korrigan has been actively reading and correlating reports of the crimes happening in Specularum. At the Duke's exit, Lord Korrigan stands and delivers a long speech detailing when and where murders were committed, fires set, and monsters conjured (the DM can prepare this speech after reading the list of incidents that follows). Lord Korrigan points out, on a large map of Specularum that hangs in the hall, the locations of all these various incidents (the DM should now give the players a copy of the "Players' Order of Events" and a map of Specularum with only locations A-L indicated).

Lord Korrigan also passes on two important pieces of information. The first and foremost is about the Black Eagle Barony. Suspicion automatically fell on Baron Von Hendriks and his wizard, Bargle the Infamous, when the murders and fires first began. It is now known that Bargle has been in the Minrothad Guilds on the baron's business for the past several weeks. The baron has just recovered from a prolonged illness (some say he was poisoned) and is busy purging his own ranks. It seems extremely unlikely, without Bargle close at hand and with internal strife in his own barony, that von Hendriks would attempt, or could attempt, a stratagem of arson and murder against the city.

The second piece of information is about the clergy. The clerics of Specularum have declared they will not use *commune* spells until a clear, concise, and significant set of questions can be asked. The Patriarchs feel it is inappropriate to bother the Immortals with questions such as, "Is so-and-so involved?" or "Is this group responsible?" As the Patriarch of the Church of Traladara has said, "If you bother the Immortals with a question, the answer had better be worth knowing."

If the DM has allowed a magic-user PC to obtain a *contact outer plane* spell from the D&D Companion Set, the PC should be allowed to use the spell. No NPC should have this spell or use it for any price. The Traladaran Patriarch's words should be heeded, for the Immortals do not enjoy being disturbed by a game of 20 questions unless it is important to their sphere of power. Immortals so disturbed may well penalize a PC by increasing his chance of insanity or their own chance of lying when contacted.

Players' Order of Events

This is the sequence of events that have happened in the city before the PCs' meeting with the Duke and Lord Korrigan. Letters in parentheses indicate the locations of the incidents on the map of Specularum. Included is a summary of what Lord Korrigan knows or believes to be true concerning these incidents. The PCs may examine evidence collected from any crime scene and acquire the names and addresses of any witnesses, suspects, or involved parties by contacting Lord Korrigan or his underlings. (See "Dungeon Master's Order of Events" for more information on these events.)

Nuwmont 18th: A guard on the wall (A) between the north end of the Nest and the Great Church of Karameikos was found murdered just after sunset. The guard's neck was broken, but the other guards saw and heard nothing. A *speak with the dead* spell revealed the guard was grabbed from behind, felt a sharp pain in his neck, then knew nothing more. The Duke offered a 200-gp reward for the name of the person responsible.

Nuwmont 20th: A warehouse (B) full of cloth burned to the ground after an initial explosion. In the night, a disreputable merchant was found murdered in an alley (C) not far away. As with the wall guard, the merchant's neck was broken. A *speak with the dead* spell revealed nothing. The merchant is known to have ties to both the Veiled Society and the Kingdom of Thieves. It is possible that this murder may be due to a dispute over stolen goods. As the merchant still had his full purse when the body was found, robbery has been ruled out as a motive for the murder. A 200-gp reward was offered for the warehouse arsonist and 100 gp for the merchant's killer.

Nuwmont 23rd: Fresh-water termites (apparently created by magic) attacked ships and wooden docks in Mirror Bay. Two small galleys were sunk, and the southernmost docks on the western side of the bay (D) were damaged. In the confusion of the attack, a watchman was thrown from the Hightower (E). Many of the guards from the Hightower had come down to help fight the termites. Those that remained in the tower saw and heard nothing until the watchman fell screaming. The Duke offered 200 gp for the names of the persons responsible for each crime.

Nuwmont 25th: There was fire by day and murder by night. An Ierendi freighter (F) caught fire at noon, killing two crew members and injuring four more. The sailing ship was taking on great bales of fleece from the warehouses on the southern shore of Mirror Bay when one of the bales erupted in a fiery explosion. The fire burned out of

control, and the ship was towed out into the bay, where it burned and sank safely away from the docks and other ships two hours later. The exact cause of the fire is unknown.

That night, a halfling was found murdered; his neck had been broken. The body was thrown into the bay but had washed up on the beach of the southern shore (G). A *speak with the dead* spell revealed nothing. The halfling, Artemus Gravel, still carried 50 gp in his pockets. He lodged at the Elk Horn rooming house. The Duke offered 500 gp for the ship arsonist and 100 gp for the halfling's murderer.

Nuwmont 28th: Another wall guard was murdered. The guard was stationed on the wall (H) just south of the Hall of the Order of the Griffon. Again, the guard's neck was broken. The other guards heard him scream but arrived too late to help or even see what happened. Spells revealed nothing further.

Three owl bears suddenly appeared in the Merchant District (I). They killed two horses, demolished a shop dealing in rare and valuable porcelain, and badly injured two people. After the attack, the owl bears just as suddenly disappeared.

A wholesale foodstuffs business (J) in the Merchant District was heavily damaged by fire. No one saw or heard anything unusual. Teldon, head of the Magicians' Guild, examined the area and stated that a *delayed blast fire ball* gem was placed under some sacks of flour. Teldon also tentatively connected the warehouse fire with the Ierendi ship fire three days ago, and more positively connected the wall guard's murder with those of the halfling, merchant, watchman, and other wall guard, based on his studies. Enraged, the Duke offered 2,000 gp for the name of the murderer, 2,000 gp for the name of the magic-user who is conjuring monsters, and 2,000 gp more for the magic-user setting fires.

Vatermont 3rd: A private guard, hired by a ship's captain, was found dead in the night aboard the galley he was guarding (K). Other sailors in the area were attacked by *sleep* spells. When questioned, the ship's captain was amazed. The ship had not loaded any cargo; the guard was simply a precaution against other sailors "borrowing" gear from his vessel while he and his crew spent the night ashore. There was only one thing missing from the vessel: a keg of lamp oil with the ship's name etched into the top and bottom of the small barrel. This made the keg a very "hot" item; no one would buy it, since it was linked to a murder. Examination showed the guard was killed with an axe, but revealed nothing more. A 100-gp reward was offered for the killer.

Vatermont 7th: A small warehouse (L) filled with kegs of tar, pitch, and caulking used by the naval shipbuilders was set ablaze. The body of a guard was found in the ruins. Several sailors saw a spell-caster hurl a *fire ball* spell at the warehouse; they chased him, but he escaped by casting a *web* spell across a narrow alley, cutting off pursuit. Believing this may be the same magic-user who has set fires across the city, the Duke offers 5,000 gp for the fire-setting magic-user and 2,000 gp for any of his henchmen. All other offers still stand.

For the Dungeon Master

Human agents are not the cause of these disasters. They have been planned and carried out by hivebrood, large parasitic insect creatures that live by

infecting other beings, controlling and eventually destroying them as individuals in the process. The hivebrood live in communities somewhat similar to ants' nests, and come in five types: broodling, hivebrood, hiveleader, hivemind, and broodmother.

Hivebrood individuals have no meaning or worth; only the interests of the hive are important. These interests are primarily to protect and preserve the broodmother, the most important member of the hive, who lives at the center of all the hive's activities and is protected with fanatical devotion by her "children." This large creature (only one per hive) exists solely to produce the small larvae called broodlings.

Broodlings are placed on paralyzed victims, usually humanoids of various types, who act as hosts for the parasitic young. A broodling does not kill its host; it adapts and modifies itself to the host in such a way that the host and broodling become virtually a single creature. This process takes one whole day and causes major changes in the host and broodling. The most obvious changes are that the host creature develops a chitinous outer shell, its eyes film over, and it becomes stiffer and more "insectlike" in its movements. Afterward, the new broodling joins its fellow hive members at work. The broodling later metamorphoses into either a hivebrood, hiveleader, or hivemind.

The hivebrood is the mature worker/soldier of the hive, from whence the entire group gets its generic name. The hiveleader is a more powerful form of hivebrood, able to give orders to the lesser members of the hive. Hiveleaders act as lieutenants for the hiveminds, who are a barely mobile type (like the broodmother) entirely devoted to controlling the activities of the hive. The hiveminds make all important decisions concerning the hive.

The most feared aspect of the hivebrood is the hivemind's ability to acquire and pass on to other members of the hive the capabilities of any creature it has eaten. When a hivemind devours a creature, it gains all that creature's abilities, including saving throws. It is then able to pass these abilities to any member of its hive through airborne chemical emissions. Thus, a hivemind that has dined on a 3rd-level thief and a 6th-level magic-user can send out chemical signals to all the hivebrood so that they can *hide in shadows* as though they were 3rd-level thieves, and cast any spells the magic-user had memorized at the time he was devoured. It is possible for each member of a hive to cast a *fire ball* spell if a hivemind has eaten a magic-user who knew the spell. Once an ability has been passed by the hivemind, it is forgotten by that hivemind. An ability is defined as being one of the following: one spell of any level or type; a skill such as one of a thief's special abilities; an Attack Rank; a fighter's combat option (see *Player's Companion,* page 18), or a level of weapon mastery (see *Master Player's Book,* page 15).

In the metamorphosis of humanoid to hivebrood, one of the most amazing changes is to the humanoid's voice. The vocal chords stiffen, the tongue flattens and becomes hard, and the process of speech becomes music itself. Air is forced through the vocal chords, causing vibrations, then over the stiff tongue, causing a low buzz. The two sounds are combined and manipulated using the jaws, mandibles, and teeth. The voice of a hivebrood, from broodling to broodmother, sounds like a large bassoon or oboe. The hivebrood language is based on the placement of the notes in the scale, although broodlings, hivebrood, and hiveleaders rarely use language, preferring to rely on chemical scents for communication. It is primarily the hiveminds who use the language to discuss affairs of the hive. Hiveminds may also speak melodious versions of common, elvish, or other languages.

No hivebrood of any kind has a personal name (numbers have been given to the hiveleaders in this adventure to clarify matters for the DM). All others are simply part of the whole and have no specific identities. Only the broodmother has the peculiarity of being a singular unit in the hive.

Food for Thought

The current situation began 10 months ago when a 20th-level magic-user, alone and unconscious, was found by the hivebrood in the heavily wooded area west of Rugalov Village. The hivebrood brought him back to the hive, west of Rugalov in Dymrak Forest. The magic-user had had a heart attack and was in no shape to be used for anything but food, so he was delivered, unconscious but still alive, to one hivemind's chamber as its evening meal.

Later, in the darkness of its chamber, the hivemind brooded as it listened to the distant rustling of hivebrood coming and going. The hivemind contemplated its newfound power, magic and knowledge swirling in its mind. The hivemind absorbed the power, gaining the spells that were once the magic-user's. These new powers also let the hivemind see an old problem in a new light.

All the hiveminds of the nest knew the Eastron Road to the south of the hive was becoming too well traveled. Rugalov Village was becoming too prosperous and Rugalov Keep too strong. Humanoids were needed for broodlings and food, but humanoids in force would harm the nest. The hiveminds knew the hive's security lay in its concealment. If the humanoids found the nest, they would lay siege and destroy it. Until now, the hiveminds had no power to do anything except mount a direct suicidal assault on the road, village, or keep. Open warfare with the humanoids would be fatal for the entire nest.

The hivemind now saw another way that that problem might be solved. It sent hivebrood scurrying off to the nest's garbage pit, which held all manner of trash and treasure — clothes, armor, shields, weapons, boots, hats, jewelry, gems, coins, staffs, rods, rings, scrolls, spell books, and anything else a humanoid might wear or carry. The hivemind wanted the 20th-level magic-user's spell books and a medallion of peculiar design. The spell books, the hivemind knew, were a source of great power, a tool to wield to solve the "humanoid problem." The *medallion of ESP* (30′ range) that the magic-user had worn was a key to the doors of the humanoid mind.

When the hivebrood returned with the spell books and the medallion, the hivemind sent forth the signal. Threat to the broodmother! Threat to the hive! Threat! Threat! The hive paused for a moment, scenting the alarm. It concerned hiveminds only, so all others resumed their labors. Here and there throughout the great nest, hiveminds stopped their work and began moving inward to the nest's center, to a large chamber near the broodmother. The Council of Drones had been called.

The hiveminds arrayed themselves in a rough circle. In the center was the alarm-giver, the hivemind who had devoured the 20th-level magic-user. It offered a possible solution to the threat

of the humanoids, the music of its voice echoing off the vaulted roof of the council chamber. Here and there, different music sounded as other hiveminds spoke. Knowledge was expanded, and a synthesis reached and announced by the council-calling hivemind. The other hiveminds voiced their opinion in a booming choir of assent: The humanoids would be attacked. (See "The Hivemind's Plan.")

The Hivemind Itself

The **hivemind** who devoured the 20th-level magic-user is now a very powerful creature with multiple spell-casting abilities (AC 6; HD 6+6; hp 40; MV 30'(10'); #AT 3 (2 claws/1 bite); Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-6 plus paralysis; Save F12 or MU20; ML 12; AL N). The bite of the hivemind causes paralysis for 2-16 turns unless a Saving Throw vs. Poison is made. This hivemind's saving throws are made as a 20th-level magic-user or as a 12th-level fighter, whichever is better. The hivemind has also devoured many low-level thieves, clerics, elves, and magic-users over the years and still retains many of their abilities. For this reason, the hivemind has spells exceeding the limitations of a normal spell-caster.

The hivemind has the same chance of performing or transferring a thief ability as thieves of the following levels: 6th, 5th, 3rd, 2nd (×3), 1st (×4). It may use or transfer any thief ability at any of the listed levels, at will.

The hivemind has devoured nine clerics and is able to Turn Undead at the following levels: 6th, 4th, 3rd, 2nd (×2), 1st (×4). Like thief abilities, the Turn Undead ability may be used at any listed level, at will. The hivemind can cast or transfer the following clerical spells: *cause light wounds, cure light wounds* (×2), *darkness, light* (×2), *remove fear, resist cold, blight, find traps, resist fire, silence 15' radius* (×2), *cause disease.*

The hivemind has devoured six magic-users of the following levels: 20th, 4th, 3rd, 2nd, 1st (×2). It has also dined on one 2nd-level and two 1st-level elves. This gives the hivemind the ability to cast the following spells: *charm person* (×3), *detect magic, hold portal, light* (×4), *magic missile* (×2), *read languages, read magic* (×4), *shield, sleep, continual light* (×2), *ESP* (×2), *knock, levitate, mirror image, wizard lock, dispel magic, fire ball, fly, hold person, invisibility 10' radius, charm monster, confusion, curse, polymorph others, polymorph self, animate dead* (×2), *feeblemind, hold monster, death spell, invisible stalker, lower water, weather control, create normal monsters, delayed blast fire ball, sword, permanence, symbol* (sleep).

The hivemind has a *medallion of ESP* (30' range) but no weapons or armor. The spell books of the hivemind contain only those magic-user spells listed. The hivemind understands and can use all these spells to their greatest potential, learning them over again at 20th level once each has been cast. If, however, a hivebrood of any type (including the hivemind) casts a spell of any sort, it loses 1 hp in the process. Any hivebrood will cast a spell and lose a hit point even if it leads to death, for the hive is far more important than the individual.

The hivemind will not let the spell books fall into humanoid hands. It will cast a *fire ball* spell on the books in an attempt to destroy them, or will use an *invisible stalker* spell to take the books to another plane. The hivemind does all it can to avoid being captured; if no escape is possible, the hivemind casts its *death spell* on itself. It will, of course, try to lure the PCs into the spell's area of effect before doing so. If captured, it will refuse to cooperate at any cost.

The Hivemind's Plan

The attack upon the humanoids would have to be carefully planned. All humanoid prisoners in the nest were interrogated using the *medallion of ESP.* From most, no useful information was gathered. Occasionally, a thief from Specularum, an elf with a good memory for the streets and alleys of the city, or a fighter with dealings in the neighborhoods called the Old Quarter and the Nest was handed to the hivemind for interrogation. Weeks and months passed, with prisoner after prisoner being interrogated, until synthesis was reached.

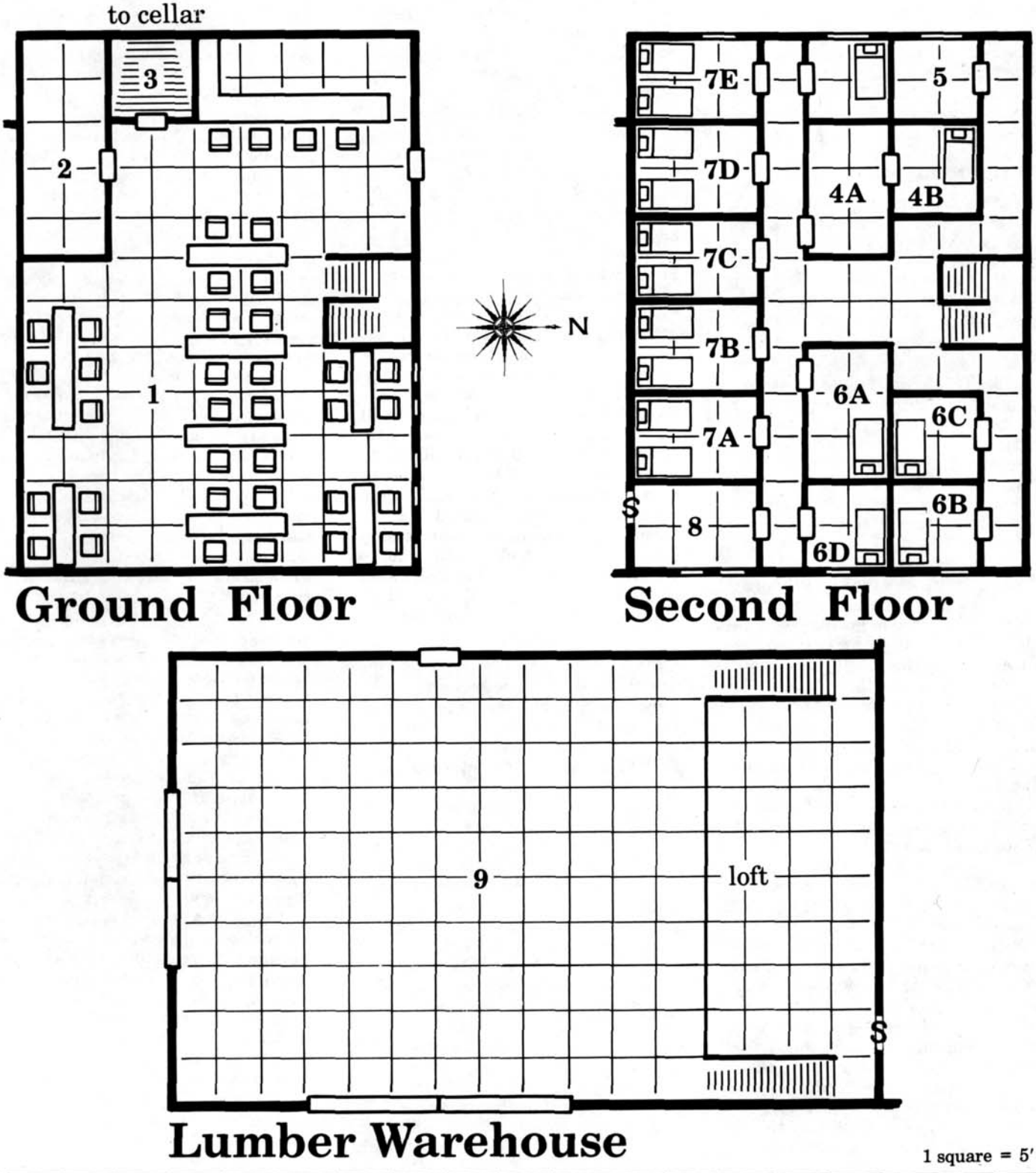
The hivemind learned many strange things about humanoids. Unlike hivebrood, humanoids were not all alike. This lack of wholeness, it realized, could be exploited to cause humanoid to fight humanoid. The hivemind decided to enter the hive of the humanoids, the one they named Specularum. With some specially prepared hiveleaders, it would turn the humanoid groups against one another, causing an internal war.

Only three hiveleaders were needed (hiveleaders being preferred because of their higher intelligence and toughness). The three hiveleaders received *polymorph self* spells from the hivemind and *polymorphed* themselves into humans. The hivemind then passed *permanence* spells to three other hiveleaders, who cast these spells on their *polymorphed* brothers. Because the hiveleaders used *polymorph self* spells, their normal armor class, hit points, and saving throws remained unchanged. However, once *polymorphed* into human form, the hiveleaders were no longer able to receive abilities from the hivemind by chemical transference. The hivemind also passed the same two spells to a second hivemind, who immediately transferred them back to the first so that the original hivemind would not permanently forget or lose the spells. The hivemind then had broodlings and hivebrood scour the trash pit, arming the *polymorphed* hiveleaders with magical arms and items.

The three *polymorphed* **hiveleaders** in human form now have the following statistics: AC 2; HD 5+1; hp 28 (#1), 21 (#2), 24 (#3); MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Save F7; ML 12; AL N. Hiveleader #1 has a *mace +1* and a *ring of spell storing.* The ring contains these spells: *charm person, web, sleep, fire ball, create normal monsters.* Hiveleader #2 has a *ring of human control* and a *sword +1.* Hiveleader #3 has a *ring of invisibility* and an *axe +2.* If a hiveleader is captured, it can tell PCs nothing. Questions, *ESP,* and any other magical mind reading reveal only such information as: "This unit was so ordered," "Unknown to this unit," and "Non sequitur; that is hivemind function." Their physical appearances are quite bland and nondescript, matching the local human population.

The spells in the *ring of spell storing* are replaced by the hivemind. Though the hivemind casts spells at 20th level, the DM should remember that the ring stores spells at the lowest level needed to cast them; the *fire ball* spell produces a 5-HD *fire ball,* and only 15 HD of monsters are created when the *create normal monsters* spell is used. Created monsters revert to their normal behavior if uncommanded by a spell-caster: water termites attack and eat wooden objects, crocodiles attack and eat any-

THE FLYING HAMHOCK TAVERN



one they find, etc.

The three *polymorphed* hiveleaders were now ready to infiltrate the city. From prisoner interrogations, the hivemind chose the Flying Hamhock Tavern as the base for launching its campaign. The hivemind rode to the city in its own form, in a covered wagon pulled by captured horses, with the *polymorphed* hiveleaders along as drivers and an escort. Once within a mile of the city, the hivemind *polymorphed* itself into human form. This gave them about four and a half hours (the duration of the hivemind's *polymorph self* spell) to enter the city, then find and take over the Flying Hamhock.

Once a base of operations was captured, the hivemind's plan was to carry on a campaign of terror using *invisible stalker* spells to murder guards, *delayed blast fire ball* spells to cause fires, and *create normal monsters* spells to stir havoc. This would be done slowly and carefully. Too heavy or too sudden a blow would bring the city together instead of tearing it apart. While the hivemind did not understand the differences between humans, it knew that such differences were important to the humanoids and could be made to work against them. The various humanoid groups, not knowing who was to blame for the trouble, would hopefully blame each other. Then, as was typical among humanoids, war would begin.

The Flying Hamhock Tavern

Unfortunately for the staff of the Flying Hamhock, the hivemind's plan went like clockwork. The hivebrood found the tavern without difficulty, rented two upstairs rooms, and waited for the tavern to close for the night. When the hiveleaders attacked, the tavern owner fell under the spell of the *ring of human control,* and the bouncer fell to a *charm person* spell from the *ring of spell storing.* The other tavern personnel found themselves face to face with the hivemind in its natural form. The hivemind used its *charm person* spells, and that was the end of any resistance by the staff.

After being *charmed,* the staff members of the Flying Hamhock were told to act normally and carry on business as usual. The only difference at the inn is that no upstairs rooms will be rented, and no one but the staff is allowed above the ground floor. If the *charm person* spell on any staff member is dispelled, he will actively oppose the hivebrood and help the PCs. The DM should not give experience points for any of the tavern staff killed by PCs; the staff members are innocent pawns of the hivemind. If any staff member is sent to prison or separated from the hivemind for longer than the duration of the *charm person* spell (one week), the hivemind sends an invisible stalker to kill that person.

The staff members of the Flying Hamhock Tavern have had shady dealings with every thieves' guild in Specularum, but they do not belong to any guild. The staff consists of the owner, Fyodor Karamazov, and four others: Mitya Ivanovich, Katerina Polenov, Gregor Samsa, and Grushenka.

Fyodor Karamazov, tavern owner: AC 7; T5; hp 14; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Save T5; ML 9; D 16; AL N. Fyodor is the owner and bartender of the Flying Hamhock Tavern. He allows no one to tend the bar but himself, claiming that the others either don't water the liquor enough or steal it outright. Fyodor is pleasant to the customers, unpleasant with the staff, and is considered a master con artist by all in the neighborhood, including himself. Fyodor is unarmored but armed with a short sword and a *dagger +2.*

Mitya Ivanovich, cook: AC 9; HD 1; hp 3; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; MV 120'(40'); Save NM; ML 6; AL C. Mitya is a fat, stupid, and easygoing individual. So long as he can cook and prepare simple meals in the tavern, Mitya is happy. If attacked or in need of a weapon, Mitya will use one of the many kitchen knives (treat as daggers). If attacked outside the kitchen, treat Mitya as unarmed.

Katerina Polenov, servant: AC 8; T3; hp 8; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Save T3; ML 8; D 15; AL N. Katerina serves food and drinks and acts as maid for the second floor (Fyodor looks after his own apartment). As waitress and maid, Katerina is able to pick pockets and pilfer small valuables. Technically, Fyodor is supposed to get 25% of her "take." He never knows how much Katerina has stolen, however, so he is constantly shortchanged (there is no honor among thieves). Katerina is armed with a dagger and keeps a blackjack hidden in a skirt pocket.

Gregor Samsa, waiter and handyman: AC 9; T4; hp 11; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Save T4; ML 8; AL N. Gregor serves food and drinks but seldom attempts to pick pockets. He prefers to confine his thievery to an occasional big job, such as looting a warehouse or ransacking the home of a wealthy merchant. Gregor likes working for Fyodor because the tavern owner knows every dealer in stolen goods in Specularum. Gregor is armed with a short sword and dagger.

Grushenka, bouncer: AC 7; F4; hp 19; MV 120'(40'); #AT; Dmg by weapon type; Save F4; ML 10; AL N. Grushenka's job is to throw out rowdy drunks and settle quarrels (forcibly, if necessary). Grushenka is short, stocky, stubborn, and mean — everything a tavern bouncer needs to be. She can be a good friend or a bad enemy. Grushenka wears leather armor and fights with a club. She also wears a special spiked glove, a punch from which does 1-4 hp damage. Grushenka carries three daggers, one openly in a sheath on her belt and two in concealment (one is in her left boot and the other in a special sheath up her right sleeve). Grushenka throws these daggers at Expert level of weapon mastery (see "Weapon Mastery," page 16, and the "Weapons Chart," page 20, in the *Master Players' Book).*

The Flying Hamhock is a typical small tavern. As far as the local authorities are concerned, this tavern is no worse than many others, and has a better reputation than some. Because of its location near the city wall, the wall guards often stop in for a pint of ale or a bowl of stew, and they are always treated well.

The hivemind has found out from Fyodor which customers are tavern "regulars" and which are not. If PCs visit the tavern more than twice, investigating crimes or interrogating the staff, the hivemind casts its *invisible stalker* spell and orders the creature to kill a PC randomly chosen by the hivemind while spying through a peephole in Fyodor's bedroom (the DM may choose or roll randomly). The **invisible stalker** (AC 3; HD 8; hp 40; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1 blow; Dmg 4-16; Save F8; ML 12; AL N) will try to attack when the PC is alone.

Descriptions of the various rooms in the Flying Hamhock, as shown on the tavern maps with this module, follow.

1. Common Room. This room is well lighted with large lanterns. Daylight or dark, shutters always cover the windows. This is partly because leaving the windows open lets in the sounds and smells of working horses and laborers (not to mention the accompanying flies), and partly to prevent anyone from spying on those in the tavern. The room is well worn, fairly clean, and smells of greasy food and cheap ale.

Hidden on the floor at the southern end of the bar is a trigger; when tripped, it rings a small bell upstairs. This warns anyone on the second floor that the authorities are coming up. Thus warned, fugitives, thieves with stolen goods (or in this case, hivebrood) can escape detection by using a secret door to the lumber warehouse behind the tavern. To catch the hivebrood before they can escape through the secret door, the PCs must stop Fyodor from triggering the bell. Thieves in the common room have normal *hear noise* chances to detect the ringing of the bell.

2. Kitchen. The kitchen is a jumble of pots, pans, and cooking utensils. Mitya Ivanovich rules over the disorder with calm. He seems to know where everything is, and can pull a small spatula or an egg whisk from a jumble of utensils whenever he needs one. The food being prepared is plain, greasy, and nourishing. The kitchen is always kept very warm by two ovens. This room smells pleasantly of spices and herbs that are kept, but never used, by Mitya.

3. Cellar (not shown on map). This is one large room, 45′ × 60′, with great wooden beams supporting the ceiling. Extra chairs, tables, and bed frames are piled in the center of the room. The walls are lined with stacks of casks, kegs, and crates. The casks and kegs hold various wines, brandies, and ales — some good, some bad, and some so cheap as to give a person a headache just looking at the keg. Many of the crates hold cheap earthenware plates, bowls, cups, and tankards; others hold knives, forks, and spoons. There are also miscellaneous tools and hardware stored in the cellar: hammer, nails, buckets, mops, brooms, and other items useful in running a tavern.

4. Fyodor's Apartment. Fyodor's neat and clean quarters are divided into two rooms. The sitting room (4A) is furnished with comfortable chairs and a table, its floor carpeted with a worn but clean rug. Fyodor's bedroom (4B) contains a bed, a nightstand, a chair, and a wardrobe. The bedroom is uncarpeted, but there is a small rug near the bed. The nightstand conceals a peephole in the floor. When the nightstand is moved away from the wall, the peephole is revealed. Anyone looking through the peephole can see the western 30′ length of the common room and bar, not the kitchen or stairs going up. The peephole is plugged when not in use, and from the common room it appears to be nothing but a small knothole.

Fyodor keeps nothing of value in his apartment and only the minimum amount of coin (change worth 130 gp value) needed to run the tavern. He, like the rest of the staff, keeps his valuables in a well-protected bank elsewhere in town.

5. Linen Closet. This room contains nothing but a laundry bin for dirty sheets and blankets, and shelves holding clean linens, blankets, and quilts.

6. Staff Quarters. These employee bedchambers were originally guest rooms, but they have been personalized and made more livable by the servants. Mitya's room (6A) has several unused cookbooks on a shelf over the bed. Grueshenka's room (6B) has a shield hanging from a peg on the wall and an old suit of leather armor stashed under the bed. Katerina's room (6C) contains a large trunk filled with stolen skirts, dresses, shirts, and shoes. She also has a large mirror hanging on the wall to the left of the door. Gregor's room (6D) is very clean and sparsely furnished. It contains nothing but a bed, a nightstand, and a spare suit of clothes hanging on the back of the door.

7. Guest Rooms. The guest rooms are all exactly alike, each with one or two beds, a chair, and a nightstand. They are clean and spartan, meant only to keep travelers comfortable for a night or two, but are too plain and bare for prolonged stays. Hiveleader #1 occupies room 7A, hiveleader #2 is in room 7B, and hiveleader #3 has room 7C. The other guest rooms are empty.

8. Hivemind's Room. Under normal circumstances, this room is never rented by Fyodor because it contains a secret door. The hivemind had the bed removed and a trunk brought up from the cellar. The *medallion of ESP* and spell books are stored in the trunk. The secret door in the southern wall of the room leads to the loft area of a lumber warehouse behind the tavern. The hivemind will use it as an escape route if necessary.

If hard pressed, or as a last resort before escaping, the hivemind casts a *create normal monsters* spell to create a **Tyrannosaurus rex** (AC 3; HD 20; hp 91; MV 120′(40′); #AT 1; Dmg 6-36; Save F10; ML 11; AL N). If this spell is cast on the second or first floor of the tavern, the weight of the creature causes the floor to collapse, and all persons and objects within 10′ fall through the hole with the monster. If the dinosaur falls through the second floor and lands on the first floor, that floor collapses into the cellar. For each floor that collapses, PCs, NPCs, and the dinosaur each suffer 1-10 hp falling damage and 2-12 hp damage from falling objects (chairs, beds, boards, beams, other PCs, etc.). PCs face the additional danger of having the dinosaur fall on them; each PC has a 10% chance that this occurs to him, doing 2-20 hp damage. It is possible for the dinosaur to fall on all the PCs, as it is large enough to belly flop on the entire party.

In the confusion, the hivemind casts a *permanence* spell on the dinosaur before the duration of the *create normal monsters* spell expires. So long as a PC remains alive in the ruins, the dinosaur will not leave the tavern. If all PCs are able to flee the ruins of the tavern, the dinosaur escapes into the streets of Specularum in 2-12 rounds. It attacks anyone or anything it finds there: PCs, innocent bystanders, horses, guards, etc. The dinosaur also damages buildings, walls, and other structures in its path. The DM should decide what type of structure the dinosaur is attacking, then use the chapter on siege equipment in the *Master Players' Book,* especially the "Creature Attacks" section, page 26, and the "Fortifications" table, page 28.

As the dinosaur is large, noisy, and easily seen, it will not take long before the city begins to fight back. After one turn, 2-8 people per round (both militiamen and ordinary citizens) begin to arrive and attack the creature with crossbows, slings, long bows, and short bows. The DM may play out this battle

if he likes; otherwise, the dinosaur is slain after half an hour.

After it has made the dinosaur permanent, the hivemind attempts to escape from the city. Any surviving hiveleaders must do their best to escape with the hivemind. Otherwise, they are left to die in the ruins. Any hiveleaders trapped in the ruins of the tavern attack PCs until either they or the PCs are destroyed.

9. Lumber Warehouse. This 50′ × 80′ lumber warehouse is owned by a friend of Fyodor, one who keeps his mouth shut about any nefarious goings-on. The secret door in room 8 opens onto a loft area of the warehouse. The main floor can be reached by stairs to the east and west. The warehouse holds scattered bundles of lumber and stacked boards of various sizes and shapes. The loft area holds boxes and kegs of nails, pegs, hinges, and other hardware.

Dungeon Master's Order of Events

At the end of this section is the full order of events in Specularum as the Dungeon Master knows them. The DM must keep in mind that this is not a mystery module in the strictest sense. As PCs investigate the murders, fires, and conjured monsters, details will be supplied by the DM as they are discovered, but the PCs will probably never deduce that there are hivebrood at the Flying Hamhock. The best the PCs can do is to realize something is wrong at the tavern and organize a raid on the place.

PCs will have a direct effect on the events that take place after Vatermont 11th. After the hivemind is discovered and exposed, no further events take place. The DM is free to rearrange these events, but care should be taken that clues are not clustered together, giving the PCs too easy a solution.

If the PCs wish to question NPCs, the DM must arrange this as appropriate. Meetings with any government figures will, by the Duke's order, run smoothly and quickly, without the usual bureaucratic delay. The two major churches and the Cult of Halav can be contacted and meetings arranged by simply going to the respective places of worship. Church and government officials cooperate freely with the PCs.

Ordinary citizens can be found at home or contacted by looking for them at work, neighborhood taverns, etc. Thyatian nobles, the heads of the Traladaran clans, guild masters, and other important people must be contacted and meetings arranged through servants and underlings. Meetings are held at a time and place convenient for the NPC, not the PCs. It is more than likely that ordinary citizens and important people will want some form of payment for the information they supply, which may be inaccurate regardless of payment. Such individuals may have purposes of their own or ulterior motives for supplying information.

Contact with the underworld of Specularum can be made at the Black-Heart Lily Tavern. Representatives of all thieves' guilds, criminal organizations, and even some street gangs can be found there. Any thief or underworld figure will certainly want payment for information.

Nuwmont 17th: The Flying Hamhock was attacked and taken over by the hivebrood. The rest of the evening was spent settling into the inn and preparing the attacks to come.

Nuwmont 18th: The hivemind cast an *invisible stalker* spell before sundown. The stalker was commanded to kill a guard on the wall (A) whom the hivemind saw from its window. Other than the information listed in the "Players Order of Events," there is no other evidence to be had concerning this crime.

Nuwmont 19th: The hivemind relearned the *invisible stalker* spell. Relearning and transferring spells always occurs on the days immediately following an attack using any magic-user spells; the time between attacks is also used to gauge the success of the hivemind's plan so far.

Nuwmont 20th: Hiveleader #3, while *invisible,* planted a *delayed blast fire ball* gem at the warehouse (B) in the early morning. There is no evidence, other than blast marks, left behind after the ensuing explosion.

In the late afternoon, the hivemind watched the common room through the peephole in Fyodor's bedroom. He picked a merchant at random and cast an *invisible stalker* spell. The merchant was killed by the invisible stalker (at B1) after he left the tavern. Interviews with the merchant's friends and his widow disclose that the merchant owed the Veiled Society a large gambling debt. An interview with any representative of the Veiled Society reveals that the merchant had worked out a payment schedule with them; his payments were up to date. The Veiled Society could only lose money from the merchant's death. There is no evidence that anyone would want to have killed the merchant. Spells reveal nothing.

Nuwmont 23rd: Hiveleader #1 walked from the Flying Hamhock at dusk to the shores of Mirror Bay and cast a *create normal monsters* spell, creating 10 fresh-water termites (D). The hiveleader was seen by an elven sailor on a small craft docked at the southern shore. The elf could not give chase or capture the spell-caster because his vessel was being attacked by the termites. The elf saw the spell-caster turn and walk due south, away from the bay. Once the spell-caster was past the wall tower, the elf could not see where he went. The elf described the assailant as a normal human wearing local dress, but distance and darkness prevented him from seeing more.

The hivemind used its *invisible stalker* spell during the termite attack. The stalker was commanded to kill anyone it chose in the Hightower. The stalker chose the watchman tending the fire and threw him from the tower (E). A *speak with the dead* spell reveals that the guard was thrown from the tower by an invisible force and did not jump. There is no other evidence.

Nuwmont 25th: Hiveleader #3, while *invisible,* hid a *delayed blast fire ball* gem in a bale of fleece being loaded on a ship (F), just before noon. The Ierendi freighter loaded the bale onboard, and 12 rounds later the gem exploded. All those killed or injured were Ierendi sailors. There is no evidence of what caused the explosion (even if PCs dive and examine the remains of the ship).

The hivemind used the peephole in Fyodor's bedroom again that evening. A halfling was chosen at random, and an invisible stalker was sent to kill him. As ordered, the stalker followed the halfling until he was alone, then killed him and threw him into the bay (G).

Interviews with the halfling's friends (eight people, evenly divided into males and females, halflings and humans) reveal the following: The halfling, one Artemus Gravel, was a con artist who confined his activities to rigged games of three-card monte and selling phony treasure maps. The halfling and his

friends visited several inns and taverns on the night of his murder. The friends left Artemus about a block from his lodgings while they returned to the Laughing Dog Tavern. If suspicion falls on them, all those accompanying Artemus that night are willing to undergo testing by *ESP, ring of truth,* scroll of *truth,* or any other magical means of determining the truth, to prove they had nothing to do with the crime.

On the night of his murder, the halfling visited two inns and three taverns in the following order: Dimension Doors, the Wizard's Gizzard, the Laughing Dog, the Flying Hamhock, and the Graceful Swan. The Graceful Swan Inn is located in the Old Quarter, and Dimension Doors is in Westron Alley, just north of the Magicians' Guild Hall. Both inns are respectable establishments. The employees of each inn remember that Artemus came in with his friends and had a meal. He is described as "a happy little chap, free with his money and fond of his dinner." They all express surprise and shock at his murder.

The Wizard's Gizzard is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Westron Alley and the Street of Dreams. This tavern is a gathering place for young magic-users looking for adventure. The staff of the tavern remembers the halfling came in and had a brandy with his friends, and they all left shortly thereafter.

The Laughing Dog is located in the Nest. It is a disreputable dive and hangout for thieves and cutthroats of all types. The staff there remembers Artemus and his friends came in and gave some young thieves a lesson in rigging a card game. The waiter at the tavern confirms that Artemus's friends returned later without him.

The Flying Hamhock should be treated no differently than the others. The staff remembers Artemus, of course. (To claim he never came in would be suspicious behavior indeed!) The halfling and his friends tried to get a game of three-card monte going, but the tavern's patrons were too wise to play. The staffs of all three taverns express shock and surprise at the halfling's death.

Radu's List of Customers

Most of Radu's customers are known to him by name and place of business. Some are known by name only and are not steady customers; they come in occasionally and Radu knows no more about them.

The following customers visited Radu's establishment the day of the fire. They are listed in the approximate order they arrived as Radu can best remember. The customers need not have purchased anything but may have come in to check the price, quality, or freshness of items. Unknown customers are not unusual, as nearly every day half a dozen people enter the shop who are total strangers to Radu.

1. Dhansur, an elf, comes in occasionally.
2. Darya Alexeyevna, the cook for the Dragonfly tavern.
3. Unknown woman.
4. Boris Nikoli, a grocer in the Lesser Merchant District.
5. Titus Angelicus, a grocer from the Merchant District.
6. Irenak Irenkov, the cook for the Laughing Dog tavern.
7. Petrovovich, comes in occasionally.
8. Unknown halfling.
9. Gladsholme Axehigh, a dwarf buying supplies for a large adventuring party.
10. Mitya Ivanovich, the cook for the Flying Hamhock tavern.
11. Barb Rahdjee Jung, comes in occasionally.
12. Unknown man.
13. Phineas Hilltopper, halfling cook for the Open Door, a rooming house in the Old Quarter.
14. Unknown man.
15. Cornelius Andracus, comes in occasionally.
16. Unknown elf.
17. Klaus Roeder, a foodstuffs buyer for several local logging companies.
18. Crimson Noblius, a buyer from the Trader's Corridor.
19. Rhadjarry Moar, comes in occasionally.
20. Corina Ptolemisus, owner of the Mirror Bay Inn.

PCs searching the halfling's room at the Elk Horn rooming house find nothing of interest.

The PCs must get permission from the owner of each establishment or from the authorities before any searches can be made. If the PCs attempt to storm through these inns and taverns, taking them apart plank by plank looking for clues and casting spells right and left, the Duke hears of their behavior and puts a stop to it immediately. PCs taking such a course of action are fined heavily by the Duke. If it happens more than once, the PCs are taken off the case and asked to leave Specularum. The DM should remember that casting a spell on an unwilling person is a crime in Specularum, a crime the unwilling party will report as soon as possible.

Nuwmont 28th: A wall guard was killed by an invisible stalker (H) at midmorning. The hivemind used the peephole and picked the Ierendi guard at random from the crowd in the tavern's common room when the man came in for breakfast. The stalker was ordered to slay the guard when the man returned to duty. Because of several drunken brawls, the man had been forced to choose between imprisonment or "special service" as a wall guard. The guard had no friends in Specularum, and no one knows or remembers at first that he stopped at the tavern. There is no evidence to be found otherwise.

Hiveleader #1 hid in an alley at noon and cast a *create normal monsters* spell, creating three owl bears. The owl bears rampaged through the Merchant District (I) for one turn. An eyewitness remembers seeing a man enter an alley, then suddenly the three owl bears appeared from the same alley. The witness can tell the PCs no more than that, as he fled the area. Visiting the alley accomplishes nothing. There is no other evidence.

Radu's Wholesale Foodstuffs (J) was set ablaze by Mitya Ivanovich, the cook at the Flying Hamhock. The hivemind ordered Mitya to hide a *delayed blast fire ball* gem under sacks of flour at Radu's. The PCs can find out that Mitya was at Radu's by asking the owner for a list of everyone who entered the shop that day. If the PCs do this, the DM should give them "Radu's List of Customers." This list contains customers' names and what Radu knows about each of them.

If asked, Mitya confirms that he was in the store that day. He points out that he shops there weekly for flour, sugar, and other goods needed in the tavern. If accused of setting the fire, Mitya denies it. He sticks to the story that he was only doing his weekly shopping. No judge in the city will agree to formally charge Mitya or set a trial date unless the PCs can explain how Mitya came by the *delayed blast fire ball* gem. Mitya may, in turn, charge the PCs with slander if they accuse him. If so charged, a judge will order the PCs to stay away from Mitya and the Flying Hamhock until their trial date (sometime in Yarthmont). If the PCs fail to obey the judge's order (the staff of the Flying Hamhock will certainly complain to authorities if they don't), they may be imprisoned or exiled to the village of Marilenev or Sulescu until the trial date. The PCs will have similar luck if they attempt to charge any other of Radu's customers with the crime.

News of the judgment of Teldon (see "Player's Order of Events") electrified the town this day. Paranoid rumors and fighting between various city factions picked up considerably over the next few days as the search for the murderers and saboteurs took shape.

Vatermont 3rd: Hiveleader #1, unarmed, went walking along the docks accompanied by an *invisible* hiveleader #3, armed with an axe. When they came upon a galley (K), hiveleader #1 cast a *sleep* spell on its guard and hiveleader #3 killed him with the axe, becoming visible. The two then took a keg of lamp oil and went back to the tavern. Witnesses in small craft on either side of the galley can tell the PCs that they saw a man walk along the dock, stop at the galley, and raise his hand. That is all they remember; everyone on both sides of the galley was put to sleep by the *sleep* spell. When they awoke, they went to the galley to see if the guard there had been put to sleep as well, only to find him dead.

Vatermont 7th: Hiveleader #1 was caught in a small warehouse (L) while attempting to cast a spell. A guard discovered and tackled the hiveleader in the middle of spell-casting. The hiveleader was able to knock the guard out, step outside the warehouse, and cast a normal *fire ball* spell. The hiveleader was chased by several sailors but escaped using a *web* spell in a narrow alley. The guard died in the fire; a *speak with the dead* spell reveals the magic-user's appearance was like that of hundreds of local people; the man was simply nondescript and wore regular work clothes. However, the guard's spirit does know that the spell-caster was very powerful and tried to bite him, though the spell-caster had no fangs.

Vatermont 10th: After hearing the accounts of these crimes, Teldon, head of the Magicians' Guild, was now convinced that some mad high-level magic-user was loose in the streets of Specularum. He advised the Duke to confiscate all spell books and magic-user scrolls, no matter how trusted the individual magic-user might be. The Duke declined this advice, fearing the consequences. Teldon closed the Magicians' Guild Hall and refused to teach any spells until the "mad wizard" was caught. Unless the PCs are trusted by and friendly with Teldon, the old wizard will not be much help to them. The wizard still consults with the Duke and other advisors, but he is very suspicious of any magic-user he has not known for a long, long time. As Teldon says, "Better suspicion undeserved than trust that kills." Magic-users in the city avoid identifying themselves as such from this day on through the rest of the crisis, to avoid vigilante action against them.

Vatermont 11th: The PCs have their meeting with the Duke and Lord Korrigan. From this point on, the PCs may become involved in the investigation, and may also accidentally walk into one of the sabotage attacks as it happens. The DM should treat the following as a set of guidelines in this case, preparing to alter the outcome of events depending on the speed and power of the PCs' response to the situation.

The hivemind cancels a planned foray for this evening in favor of another attack to be made two days from now (see following entry).

Vatermont 13th: It is a terrible day for Specularum. Three large sailing ships return at dawn from the Thanegioth Archipelago carrying cargoes of strange and rare creatures captured on those distant islands. The creatures are transferred to a warehouse (M) on the western shore of Mirror Bay. The warehouse, though well guarded by the adventurers who captured the creatures, is set ablaze. A small empty oil keg is found

only a few yards from the fire; the keg can be identified, by the name on the top and bottom, as the one stolen from the vessel where the private guard was killed 10 days before. Other than the fact that these two crimes are linked, there is nothing more to discover.

The attack occurs as follows: Hive-leader #3 walks up to the warehouse while *invisible* and sets it on fire using the keg of lamp oil and a torch. The guards are so busy watching the doors and monsters that they are taken by surprise when a wall goes up in flames. As the warehouse burns, the captured creatures go insane with fear at the smoke, heat, and fire. Several escape from the warehouse and manage to get into the city streets. The militia and the adventurers responsible for bringing the monsters into Specularum go after them but can't be everywhere at once. The PCs may play an active role in hunting down some of these creatures or be called upon to help subdue or kill a creature once it is cornered.

Two **phororhacoses** (AC 6; HD 3; hp 11, 9; MV 150′(50′); #AT 1 bite; Dmg 1-8; Save F2, ML 8; AL N) escape from the warehouse, then begin chasing down small animals (pigs, dogs, goats, halflings, etc.) for food.

Two **dimetrodons** (AC 5; HD 7; hp 32, 29; MV 120′(40′); #AT 1 bite; Dmg 2-16; Save F4, ML 8; AL N) attack anything that they might be able to eat. These large, sail-backed lizards are especially fond of crashing into the stables of inns and taverns, killing and devouring the horses, ponies, and stableboys they find there.

Two **sabre-tooth tigers** (AC 6; HD 8; hp 37, 28; MV 150′(50′); #AT 3 (2 claws/1 bite); Dmg 1-8/1-8/2-16; Save F4; ML 10; AL N) are savage and dangerous. The two hunt together through the streets of Specularum looking for humanoids, their favorite prey. They may lair in any convenient building.

A **giant scorpion** (AC 2; HD 4; hp 18; MV 150′(50′); #AT 3 (2 claws/1 sting); Dmg 1-10/1-10/1-4 plus poison; Save F2; ML 11; AL N) hunts around the shores of Mirror Bay. It attempts to kill and eat any sailors or dockworkers it can find. If not destroyed quickly, it will establish a lair among the many warehouses along the docks.

A **giant tuatara lizard** (AC 4; HD 6; hp 25; MV 90′(30′); #AT 3 (2 claws/1 bite); Dmg 1-4/1-4/2-12; Save F3; ML 6; AL N) escapes into the Nest. It hunts for prey in the narrow winding streets, establishing a lair in an abandoned building.

The Duke swears the death penalty for anyone convicted of setting the fire. He pronounces a new law forbidding anyone to store dangerous creatures anywhere within the city walls. The Duke offers 10,000 gp each for the name of the murderer, summoning magic-user, or arsonist.

Riots break out this evening between numerous factions across the city. Several suspected magic-users are attacked by mobs, and two are slain. Religious and political groups battle in the streets as well. Six other persons die as guards try to separate the fighters. Rioting continues on the following night. Guards and vigilantes patrol the streets heavily for the next six nights.

Vatermont 16th: The PCs receive a note via messenger: "Meet me tonight at the abandoned farm southwest of town. Bring 5,000 gp in gems or jewelry, and I will give you the names of those responsible for the murders and fires. I am a wanted criminal in Specularum and cannot claim the reward without facing imprisonment, but I am also a patriot. These crimes must be stopped. Think of the 5,000 as my share of the reward. Under no circumstances bring any militia or guards with you. I will be watching. If I suspect you have set a trap to capture me, I will take my offer elsewhere. Bring the valuables and wait in the old barn. When I'm sure it's safe, I will contact you."

The note is an invitation to a trap. A gang of thugs from the Street of Dreams, known locally as the Dream Streeters, have sent the note to the PCs. The Dream Streeters will do virtually anything if the price is right. The thugs hope to lure the PCs to the abandoned farm and rob them of the 5,000 gp. They will also take the PCs' weapons, armor, magical items, and anything else of value, but only slay the PCs if they resist.

If the PCs follow the note's instructions, they take the Farmer's Road that travels southwest out of the city. Two miles down this road is an old, rickety barn, all that remains of a once-prosperous farm. The Dream Streeters have surrounded the barn in a wide circle, undercover. Any attempt by the PCs to bring the militia, guards, or anyone else along for protection is noticed, and the encounter does not take place. However, the gang is looking for visible signs the PCs have an escort. Invisible or high-flying PCs may follow the others and arrive in time to ambush the ambushers.

The old barn is 100′ long by 80′ wide. (As the barn is nothing but a large rectangle, the DM can draw his own map running north to south.) The roof towers nearly 75′ overhead. The barn once had doors at both the north and south ends, the only ways into or out of the building. The doors at the southern end are completely gone, leaving an entrance 30′ wide by 20′ high. The two northern doors still stand and are both 20′ wide by 30′ high. Both doors stand wide open. If inspected, the doors obviously cannot be closed or even moved. They sag deeply into the earth and mud. Anyone approaching the barn from the north or south can see there is virtually nothing inside. The bare beams and supports of the loft still remain, but the boards are gone. The PCs can see at a glance that it is impossible for anyone to hide in the barn. There is a noisy stream running close to the eastern wall of the barn. The stream bubbles and chatters so loudly over the stones that it completely negates a thief's *hear noise* ability.

If the PCs have come alone, then 21 Dream Streeters close their circle about the barn and attack only one turn after the PCs enter the barn.

Elite Dream Streeter thugs (10): AC 7; F3; hp 16, 15 (×2), 12 (×5), 11 (×2); MV 120′(40′); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Save F3; ML 9; AL C. Each is armed with two vials of sleep gas, a crossbow with five poisoned quarrels, and a short sword. All wear leather armor.

Typical Dream Streeter thugs (10): AC 8; F1; hp 6, 5 (×4), 4 (×5); MV 120′(40′); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Save F1; ML 8; AL C. Each is armed with a vial of sleep gas, a crossbow with two poisoned quarrels, and a short sword. All carry small shields but wear no armor.

The group is lead by a **5th-level thief** (AC 5; T5; hp 12; MV 120′(40′); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Save T5; ML 10; AL C). He is armed with a crossbow with five poisoned quarrels, a *short sword +1* and a *dagger +2*. The thief wears *leather armor +2*.

The thugs attack first by throwing vials of sleep gas (Save vs. Poison or sleep for 2-12 hours). Saving throws

must be made every three rounds as long as a PC is in or passing through a gas cloud. The small glass vials each burst into a 20′ × 20′ cloud of gas that lasts one turn before dissipating. The thugs throw the vials into the barn and in front of the exits from the barn (with a 5% chance each that the thug *drops* a vial and breaks it). The PCs can leave the barn only by running through at least two gas clouds, one in the barn and one in front of the exit. At least four thugs will hold their vials for use in combat later.

Anyone escaping the sleep gas is shot with poisoned quarrels. The quarrels do normal damage, and a Saving Throw vs. Poison must be made per hit or the PC is paralyzed until cured by a *neutralize poison* or *cureall* spell. After the thugs exhaust their supply of sleep gas and poison quarrels, anyone not asleep or paralyzed is attacked with short swords.

If the PCs fall to the Dream Streeters, the 5,000 gp and all their possessions are gone forever. The PCs are found the next day by farmers and, depending on the PCs' conditions, either returned to Specularum or buried. If the PCs defeat the Dream Streeters, it breaks the back of the gang and the Dream Streeters cease to be of concern to Specularum.

Vatermont 19th: A man is found murdered with an axe in his rooms at the Black-Heart Lily Tavern (N). The man was actually a spy hired by the Veiled Society to infiltrate the other thieves' guilds. None of the other guests heard or saw anything unusual.

The spy tried to sell stolen goods to Fyodor Karamazov. However, after coming under the hivemind's spell, Fyodor was forbidden to engage in criminal activity, as it might bring the militia to the Flying Hamhock. When Fyodor refused to act as buyer or direct the spy to someone who would, the spy threatened to make trouble for Fyodor. The spy did not elaborate, but the threat was his own death sentence. The hivemind sent an *invisible* hiveleader #3 to kill him with an axe (while carrying another *invisibility* spell for escape in memory).

The spy lodged in two 10′ × 10′ rooms, one a bedroom and the other a sitting room. If the PCs search the bedroom, they find nothing but a table, three chairs, and a wardrobe holding nondescript clothing. If they search the sitting room, they may find a spell book with an *invisibility* spell cast on it, resting atop the wardrobe. The PCs must feel around on top of the wardrobe, or else use a *detect invisible* or *detect magic* spell, to find the book. The book has a small lock that is *wizard locked* at the 4th level of ability.

If the spell book is found and examined, the PCs discover that the spy was a 4th-level magic-user. The spell book contains these spells: *read languages, read magic, light, invisibility, web,* and *wizard lock.* It also contains several notes and a map. The map consists of various sizes of squares and rectangles with no markings, magical or otherwise, to explain what it is; it does not even have a compass point to orient it.

This map is actually a false clue; it is a map of an area of town in which the spy believes the Kingdom of Thieves' headquarters is located. Only by using a *speak with the dead* spell (the spy was Chaotic) to interrogate the dead spy will the map's purpose be revealed. The spell book also contains several scribbled notes the magic-user apparently wrote to himself as reminders, using a private magical shorthand; a *read magic* spell allows these notes to be translated, as shown in parentheses in the notes below:

"S's from suds." ("Remember to pick up shirts from the laundry.")

"K's weird. Who use peeper?" ("Karamazov is acting strangely. Who is using the peephole?")

"Looky gp man, ha-ha dog, flypig, D.O., BH Lily. No go." ("I looked for a dealer in stolen goods in these taverns: Laughing Dog, Flying Hamhock, Dainty Ogre, Black-Heart Lily. I didn't find one.")

"T's jerk. Hall no go, must weird stop." ("Teldon is a jerk. The Magicians' Guild Hall will not be reopened unless the murders and fires cease and the perpetrator is discovered.")

"Looky over MD, LMD. No go read-Zs my gp. Try SM, HM." ("I looked all over the Merchant District and the Lesser Merchant District, but I couldn't find a *sleep* spell scroll at the price I wanted to pay. I will try the South Market and the Hill Market next.")

"Kat got gp? Very looky." ("Did Katerina pick my pocket? I will watch her very closely.")

If the PCs confront Fyodor Karamazov with the second note, he does not deny knowing the murdered man. He claims, however, that the man offered to sell him stolen goods, but he turned the offer down. Karamazov flatly states that, although he used to buy and sell stolen property in his younger days, he has been out of that business for years. He claims to know nothing about any peephole. If the PCs find the peephole in his room, he whispers that it is there to keep an eye on customers and the staff, and therefore must remain a secret. If asked, Katerina does not deny knowing the man either, but claims to have never picked his pocket (or anyone else's, she says).

Vatermont 21st: There is a fire at the Great Church of Karameikos (O) in the afternoon. No one is injured, but damage is moderate. The cathedral is unharmed; only meditation and storage rooms are damaged. The Cult of Halav is rumored to have set the fire, and several cult members are attacked and injured by an irate crowd in the Merchant District shortly thereafter.

Hiveleader #3 sets the fire using a *delayed blast fire ball.* There is no evidence other than the blast and burn marks to indicate a *delayed blast fire ball* gem was left in a storage room. No one sees or hears anything unusual. The church is open to the public, and many people come and go daily. It is therefore impossible for church officials to supply the PCs with any useful information about who was in the church that day.

Vatermont 25th: Late in the night, the hivemind and hiveleader #1 use the secret door to enter the warehouse (P) behind the Flying Hamhock. Hiveleader #1 casts a *create normal monsters* spell and creates a **giant amoeba** (AC 9; HD 15; hp 67; MV 30′(10′); #AT 1 acid touch; Dmg 2-12; Save F7; ML 10; AL N). The hivemind casts a *permanence* spell on it, and the creature oozes off to disappear into the Nest, killing and eating anything it can. If the PCs ask for times and locations of attacks by the amoeba (in an attempt to establish a pattern or direction of movement), the DM can mark their map with points anywhere in the Nest. The amoeba hunts at random, moving in one direction then another. It may kill a pony, a pig, and several chickens in a straight line heading south, then suddenly turn west to devour a milk cow, then turn north to eat several goats. The resulting "pattern" is a meandering line leading nowhere. The times of the attacks are likely to be vague or confused as well (an owner, for instance, may only know that her milk cow disappeared sometime between sundown and sunrise).

The amoeba stays in the Nest until driven out or destroyed, liking the food it gets here.

Public outrage mounts. Rumors are heard on the next day that the Duke has been quarreling with his advisors or with other major officials in the city over a response to this and other events, and that city officials are at wit's end. A drunken dockworker is slain by a paranoid guard on the following night after failing to give the proper password before boarding a ship. The guard is released after questioning and is not charged.

Vatermont 28th: Just after midnight, there is a huge explosion at the Hightower (E). The roof and top floor burst into flames. Four guards are killed and 12 are injured. Damage to the Hightower is 50,000 gp, plus the replacement cost of catapults and ballistas. Flaming debris and rubble fall on nearby warehouses, docks, and ships, and into the Merchant District below, causing many fires. There is a general alarm and call for volunteers across the city. Specularum comes completely awake, and the Duke orders a military alert to quell looting and rioting. Nearly 200 people storm the city's gates and flee for other towns, willing to risk travel at night rather than stay in the city any longer. Six ships also cast off and sail out of port that night.

The hivemind cast *fly* and *invisibility* spells on hiveleader #3 and then cast a *delayed blast fire ball* spell. The hivemind gave the *delayed blast fire ball* gem to hiveleader #3 and told it to fly over the Hightower, dropping the gem into the oil fire that burns there to guide ships into the harbor. The gem was dropped into the oil fire without anyone noticing, and the hiveleader flew back to the Flying Hamhock undetected. When the gem exploded 10 rounds later, it threw the fiery oil everywhere and detonated several kegs of oil stored nearby. There is no evidence of how the explosion happened. The tower will be repaired in two months, but during that time it has no ballistas or catapults.

In the fiery confusion that follows, hiveleader #1 uses his ring to cast a *create normal monsters* spell at area Q, creating 30 **kobolds** (AC 7; HD ½; hp 3 (×15), 2 (×15); MV 90′(30′); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type at −1; Save NM; ML 6; AL C) wearing leather armor and armed with short swords. For the spell's duration, the kobolds scatter through the afflicted area and attack anyone attempting to put out the fires. No one notices who created the monsters. Eight people are slain and 15 are injured before all the monsters vanish.

Anyone who walks the streets in obvious magic-user garb after the blast is subject to attack by enraged and frightened townspeople or to arrest by frustrated guardsmen. The DM should play out these events as desired. Twenty-nine suspected magic-users are arrested (possibly including PCs), but all are freed 13-24 hours later after being investigated. Anyone caught with a scroll containing a *fire ball* or *monster summoning* spell or the like will be held indefinitely and carefully investigated by the Duke's own staff of spell-casters. Extra guards may have to defend prisoners from lynch mobs and vigilantes.

Thaumont 2nd: This night, a large sailing ship from the Minrothad Guilds is docked on the southern shore (R). The ship carries a cargo of rare silks and expensive glass sculptures. After the ship's captain is warned of the current situation in Specularum, he orders armed guards to patrol the ship while the vessel's crew goes ashore for the night. The ship is to be unloaded in the morning. Three hours later, the ship lurches and sinks to the bottom of the bay. City guards are summoned, and the area is blocked off. A small riot breaks out as hundreds of people flee the area, fearing further attacks or explosions.

From the guards, the PCs can learn that, about midnight, a man walked on board carrying two large jugs. The guards challenged him, but he ignored all warnings. The guards fired their crossbows and hit the man twice, but he seemed unaffected and jumped into the cargo hold. The guards looked down just in time to see him break both jugs, releasing a liquid which immediately began to eat through the wooden hull. The guards fired at the man once more, but the water began pouring in and they abandoned ship.

Divers attempting to retrieve the glass sculptures at dawn claim that the man is still in the hold, "just standing there with a bunch of arrows in him and his feet all eaten up by the acid." The divers refuse to go back down to the ship until something is done about the man.

To accomplish this feat, the hivemind used an *animate dead* spell on a deceased thief (who was poisoned by Mitya on the hivemind's orders) to create a zombie. The hivemind instructed the zombie to go to any large ship, enter the hold, and break the jugs. The Minrothad freighter was unfortunate enough to be the first ship the zombie found. The hivemind assumed the zombie would be destroyed by the acid, but the inrushing water lifted it out of the acid and hurled it to the back of the cargo hold. There it now stands on ruined feet, awaiting further instructions.

The ship was sunk in a deep-water berth used for large sailing vessels. The top deck of the ship is only about 3′ underwater; the floor of the cargo hold where the zombie stands is about 40′ underwater. The **zombie** (AC 8; HD 2; hp 3 (15 originally); MV 90′(30′); #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; Save F1; ML 12; AL C) is unarmed. It may be Turned or Destroyed normally by a cleric, or eliminated by a spell-caster using a *dispel magic* spell.

If a *speak with monsters* spell is used, the zombie answers the cleric's questions. If a *speak with the dead* spell is used, the zombie is silent; it is *undead,* not dead. If the zombie is Destroyed before a *speak with the dead* spell is used, the spell operates normally.

The PCs must hurry if they want to

question the zombie. The hivemind hears shortly after the divers return that the zombie is still in the ship, and it sends hiveleader #1 to deal with it. Hiveleader #1 casts a *create normal monsters* spell, creating seven **crocodiles** (AC 5; HD 2; hp 14 (×2), 9 (×3), 7 (×2); MV 90'(30'), swimming 90'(30'); #AT 1 bite; Dmg 1-8; Save F1; ML 7; AL N) that attack anyone in the water. They also fight over the zombie, scattering its remains all over the bay.

A *lower water* spell lowers the water level in and around the ship to half its normal depth, but does not keep the crocodiles out. The inrushing water knocked a cargo bay door from the side of the ship, allowing easy access into the cargo holds for all the marine life in Mirror Bay. Unless the PCs talk to the divers about the cargo hold, they are not informed of the missing door. It cannot be seen until after a *lower water* spell is cast or the cargo hold is entered.

Once the crocodiles have attacked the zombie, there is nothing left on which to use a *speak with . . .* spell. Hiveleader #1 hides farther down the docks from the sunken ship, and after casting the spell he returns to the tavern unnoticed. He casts his spell at the exact time as the first spell is cast on or at the zombie (or corpse) by a PC (a cleric's Turn or Destroy attempts do not count). The crocodiles arrive four rounds after the spells are cast. The PCs have these four rounds to ask questions and receive answers. The DM should use real time for these four rounds (40 seconds), keeping an eye on the second hand of a watch but speaking normally and not hurrying the answers. When the four rounds are up, the PCs will be too busy to converse with the zombie.

In zombie form, the dead thief answers questions about his life, death, and undeath. If asked, it tells the PCs that a "huge insect" sent it to destroy the ship; the "insect" lives on the top floor of the Flying Hamhock. As a corpse, the dead thief can only reveal what happened up to the time of his death. He remembers drinking heavily and alone in the Flying Hamhock, suddenly feeling a sharp pain in his neck, then nothing more.

Further events: The DM may design more sabotage attempts by the hivemind and hiveleaders along the above lines, though there is an increasing chance that the monsters will eventually be caught by hypercautious guards or by their own mistakes. Each such event further increases the panic, anxiety, dread, and anger of the city's inhabitants. Rioting, looting, and copycat works of arson and murder may also spread as different groups fight it out in the belief that other groups are responsible for the troubles.

Optional encounter: The DM may use this encounter at any time the PCs visit the Flying Hamhock. If the PCs attract the hivemind's attention by asking questions and snooping around, the hivemind casts a *curse* spell on a single gold piece. The hivemind then delivers the *cursed* coin to the PCs in this fashion: Gregor hides the gold piece in his hand, then clumsily tries to pick the pocket of one of the PCs (DM's choice or roll randomly). The PC, upon catching Gregor, may naturally assume the gold piece is his own. No judge in Specularum will charge Gregor with anything but petty theft (if so charged, Gregor pleads guilty and is fined 6 gp). As one gold piece looks much like another, the PCs will be unable to prove to a judge that Gregor planted the *cursed* coin.

The coin's *curse* acts the same as a clerical *cause fear* spell and takes effect every 1d6+24 turns. Anyone in possession of the gold piece when the curse takes effect runs off in a blind panic for two turns. Any magical attempt to cure the panic, such as a *remove fear, dispel magic,* or *remove curse* spell, not cast directly on the gold piece works only for the spell's duration (spells with permanent duration have no effect at all). After that time, the *curse* starts again. In addition, anyone who owns this coin will not want to spend it or be parted from it for any reason. To be permanently rid of the *curse,* magic must be used directly on the coin, or the coin must be destroyed.

Concluding the Adventure

If the hivemind is discovered and either destroyed or driven from Specularum, the Duke immediately sends forth criers and heralds to tell the people they have been duped into fighting one another. The Church of Karameikos and the Church of Traladara hold a joint service and call for brotherhood. The two churches and the Duke establish a special tribunal to settle disputes among groups. They also raise, with equal shares from each, a fund to pay for damages and heal wounds caused by the unrest. In this way, the Duke hopes that no festering grudges will be held or reprisals taken.

If the PCs rid Specularum of the hivemind, the Duke raises the social status of each surviving party member by one rank, but no one will be granted a title higher than baron. Those PCs already holding a barony are given more land. If it is impossible for a PC to receive land connecting to his property, because of geography or because all existing connected properties belong to someone else, the Duke grants that PC a one-year tax exemption.

In addition to social advancement, the Duke pays for all equipment, magical items, armor, and weapons damaged, destroyed, or used up by the PCs in ridding Specularum of the hivebrood. The Duke also gives each surviving PC a 20,000-gp reward. The DM should give this reward in goods and services rather than in coin. Arms and armor, horses and livestock, minor magical items, and the services of court specialists (such as the sage, cartographer, or armorer) are more appropriate rewards than a huge diamond or a chest of coins.

If the PCs are unable to find the source of the trouble in Specularum, the DM may resolve the situation in a number of ways. There are a host of NPCs available in the gazetteer GAZ1 *The Grand Duchy of Karameikos* who may be able to help the PCs. "Lord" Dmitrios, Prince of Beggars, while begging in the Merchant District, may see hiveleader #1 conjure monsters and secretly follow it back to the Flying Hamhock. Dmitrios, fearing that the hiveleader is in league with one of the Traladarn clans (people he does not want any trouble with), may give his information to the PCs (for a price, of course) rather than to the militia. Or perhaps Lady Marianita, the ambassador from the Principalities of Glantri, while shopping in the Merchant District, feels a presence and casts a *detect invisible* spell. She sees *invisible* hiveleader #3 stroll by and follows it back to the Flying Hamhock. Being *invisible* is not a crime in Specularum, but it is still suspicious, and she gives this information to the PCs to check out.

PCs with high Charisma scores may choose to try to unite the people against the unknown foe. However, the PCs will not be able to look for the hivemind and be peacemakers at the same time. It takes too much time to meet with vari-

ous leaders and family heads, settle grievances, and negotiate equitable agreements between groups to have time left over to investigate mysterious fires and murders. As peacemakers, the PCs should be kept very busy running all over Specularum visiting and calming one hot spot after another. If the PCs do calm the populace and help keep order in the city, the Duke is free to direct efforts to root out the hivemind. For such help, the Duke pays a 20,000-gp reward per PC and raises the social status of each PC by one rank, with no one made higher than knight. If a PC holds such status or higher already, the Duke instead adds an extra 5,000 gp to the reward.

The DM may wish to let things get more and more out of hand until civil war breaks out, taking such a war in any direction he wishes. Karameikos can become stronger, weaker, a perpetual war zone, or cease to exist as a nation. The Black Eagle Barony and schisms within the Church of Karameikos may greatly influence the outcome of such a war. The DM is advised that such wars can take a great deal of time and effort to prepare and run properly.

If the hivemind escapes Specularum and returns to the hive, it gives the other hiveminds details of what happened and how successful the plan was. If a civil war breaks out, the hiveminds bide their time and occasionally "harvest" stray humans near the hive. If the hivemind is discovered before it flees Specularum, the Council of Drones calls for the broodmother to lay broodmother eggs. These eggs are then taken to remote locations with a retinue of hivebrood, and new hives are established.

Ultimately, of course, the PCs may wish to carry the fight straight to the hivebrood complex, leading to a protracted war deep in the underground tunnels (unless poison gas and explosive spells are used to produce random but extensive damage to the complex). The DM should take time to make the hivebrood complex reasonably dangerous, assuming the hiveminds have done their best to set up defenses suited to stopping humanoids from invading it easily. Loss of the hivemind leading the fight against Specularum will seriously cripple the hivebrood's ability to combat the PCs, though the hivebrood will fight to the bitter end without question or quarter. And, as always, there are other nests to carry on the battle another day. Ω

(continued from page 17)

THE RUINS OF NOL-DAER

MacDaer
Major Cambion

ARMOR CLASS: *1*
MOVE: *15"*
HIT DICE: *7*
HIT POINTS: *43*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *2*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon type*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Spells, thieving abilities*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *15%*
SIZE: *M (6'5", 215 lbs.)*
ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic evil*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

S	I	W	D	C	Ch	Co
18/89	16	8	16	15	14	5

MacDaer appears human, except for vestigial horns, misshapen ears, and glowing red eyes. He fights as a 7-HD monster in addition to functioning as a 7th-level thief and a 5th-level magic-user. As a thief, he is able to backstab for triple damage (at +4 "to hit") and has the following abilities:

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	HN	CW	RL
60%	52%	50%	55%	43%	25%	94%	35%

MacDaer is a practicing thaumaturgist. The spells he normally has memorized are: *identify, magic missile* (×2), *sleep, rope trick, stinking cloud,* and *slow.* He also owns several magical items which he keeps on his person at all times.

At his waist, MacDaer carries a scroll of *protection from breath weapons* in a silver case, and a full potion of *invisibility.* He wears *bracers of defense AC 4,* a *ring of protection +1,* and at all times wears an *amulet of the Abyss* (see "New Magical Items"). Although he carries a normal dagger, his weapon of preference is his magical *long sword +2.* An unusual sword, with an intelligence of 15 and the ability to speak the demon tongue, it can *detect evil, good,* and *invisible* objects in a 10' radius and *detects sloping passages* in a 30' radius. It has an ego rating of 6. Since it was forged in the Abyss, it is aligned to chaotic evil. Anyone of a different alignment who touches the sword suffers 6 hp damage every time any portion of the sword is touched. If MacDaer is reduced to fewer than 7 hp, the sword either continues the fight (50% chance), causes itself to drop from his grasp (25% chance), or forces MacDaer to seek out a more powerful owner and relinquish the sword (25% chance). Ω

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